AD HOC ENTREPRENEURS

Middle-Layer Musicians and the Contemporary Media Landscape

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Ad Hoc Entrepreneurs:
Middle-Layer Musicians and the
Contemporary Media Landscape

PhD Dissertation

by

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Introduction

This dissertation is a study of key structural changes in the conditions of popular music artists, specifically within two rock music scenes in Scandinavia and the United States. The aim is to understand how organizational and communicational practices of middle-layer musicians are related to media-driven changes in the music business. The analysis considers the implications of popular social media for both the mediation of the artist and for the business model that regulates the distribution of agency in the music business.

Since at least the late 2000s, it has been widely recognized that the ease of production and distribution of music in the digital age has profoundly changed the music business, and especially the recording industry. Since then, scholars have been busy understanding the scope and dimensions of the changes, producing an analytical survey literature. This dissertation draws from this literature but also confronts the relatively unexplored question of how musicians are adapting to the new conditions of online distribution and popular social media. This dissertation investigates how musicians are shaping their professional practices in response to the digitalization of the music industries, and especially how musicians are adopting managerial and communicative tasks.

The existing literature on digitalization in the music business points to important implications such as changing consumption patterns and power relations between artists, audiences and recording companies. By the mid-2010s these processes seem to define a more lasting condition. Musicians' barriers of entry, for instance, continue to be lower than in the pre-digital era and involve ongoing negotiations of the

organizational and economic dimensions of creative control and talent development. At the same time, networked media continue to increase the global competition.

The existing literature on musicians and digital media is smaller, but have produced important insights into how professional musicians to communicate directly with their audiences makes it possible to distribute music and build emotional ties with fans. However, social media also impose new demands that raise issues of the relation between privacy, authenticity and market communications.

This dissertation examines the complexity of the situation even further with inspiration from theory of media and social change, arguing that the implications of digitalization and mediatization more broadly in the early to mid-2010s are far-reaching. The dissertation looks beyond the mediations themselves to see self-mediation as a kind of identity making and work. Moreover, the dissertation looks at self-mediation and self-distribution as elements of self-management, exploring the idea that the industry and media changes together stimulate the rise of a new form of entrepreneurialism among musicians.

The core research question of the dissertation is:

How are middle-layer rock musicians shaping their professional practices in response to the evolving media landscape?

The dissertation seeks to answer the question through empirical case studies of four musicians and their bands conducted between 2012 and 2015.

The argument of this dissertation is that digital technologies are affecting the professional practices of middle-layer musicians as part of broader changes in everyday routines, labor tasks, and social roles. In this sense, digitalization has broader implications than just economic restructuring. Middle-layer musicians are given the opportunity to record, produce, distribute and market their music in unprecedented ways and to an unprecedented extent. But along with these opportunities comes changing income streams and changing expectations from the industry as well as from audiences.

The present work positions itself as music industry research with a particular interest in the musicians' perspective. The dissertation develops an understanding of changes in the nexus between music industries, media, and cultural labor affect middle-layer rock musicians, drawing from literatures in each of these research traditions. The dissertation integrates 1) literatures on the music industries in sociology and business studies (e.g., Negus 2011/1993, Hesmondhalgh 2012, Wikström 2013) with 2) sociological research on labor in cultural industries (Ryan 1992, Banks 2007, Stahl 2013) and 3) communication and media research on the production of identity, with a particular emphasis on changing social roles and the performance of self (Baym 2012, Benkler 2006, Jenkins 2006, Hearn 2008, Meyrowitz 1985).

Throughout the dissertation, the term *middle-layer musicians* is used to describe the type of musicians that are the focus of this study. The term is used as a tool for a broad framing of the media, organizational, and economic dimensions of these musicians vis-à-vis amateurs on one side and super stars on the other. The term is not commonly used in academic or everyday contexts, but might be relevant for future studies of popular music musicians because the current media landscape has allowed this type of musician to grow—musicians who are professional musicians in the sense that writing, recording and performing music is their primary occupation, and they are able to make a living from this. They receive some media attention from media specializing in a particular genre or style of music, and although they have loyal fans that follow them, their music is not commonly known outside their particular culture or home region. In this sense, middle-layer artists are characterized by being neither amateurs nor stars. The dissertation adopts this more general framing rather than the term indie musicians. Some of the musicians have been identified with the term indie rock, but not all of them, and they are examined as examples of something more general, not as examples of particular musical styles. There was already a need for looking beyond the term indie in the beginning because this term has become diffuse through its popularization and globalization since the early 2000s.

Others have used the term *mid-level artists* (Kretschmer 2005; Goldberg 2005) to refer to this type of musicians, but mid-level might have an unfortunate connotation as a reference to the skill level or an aesthetic valuation of the musicians, which is why I have opted for the term *middle-layer musicians*.

One might argue that there is a class-dimension of the term middle-layer musicians in that they are distinguished from other groups of musicians in socio-economic terms.

However, the framing of the term in this dissertation is primarily understood in the context of broad and general conditions in the media landscape and the practical organization of professional activities, so class is not relevant in a conventional sense, as will be clear from the case studies. This also means that the term middle-layer will not be defined as a substantive term but mainly in the context of the industry and media theory outlined in chapters 3-4

Why study middle-layer musicians? Although everyone is affected by the same dynamics, the consequences are different for different strata of musicians. While amateurs have benefitted from improved access to recording and distribution, this has also blurred the line between amateurs and professionals and created an abundance of non-hit music, paradoxically making it harder for these musicians to transform music from a hobby to a professional career. Simultaneously the international superstars and major labels have consolidated their economic dominance of the music business, creating what has been called a 'blockbuster economy' (Elberse 2013). The result is arguably a polarization of the music market that leaves middle-layer artists under pressure to find new strategies to build and sustain a career. And whereas studies have focused on how amateurs use the affordances of digital music production and distribution, and other studies have focused on the economic consequences of digitalization on an industry level (which are closely tied to the conditions for superstars), there has been little research focusing on the conditions for middle-layer musicians.

I have chosen to focus on two aspects of middle-layer musicians' professional practices: 1) how they organize their professional activities and manage their artistic identity in a digital age, and 2) how they employ new media to achieve these objectives.

There are two reasons for this. First, these are two of the areas where the biggest change has happened since the advent of digital distribution of music. They are, furthermore, indirectly linked to other aspects of these musicians' professional lives, such as live performances and publishing, which have also been affected by the changes in the music business. Second, the organizational and media practices of middle-layer musicians are linked to each other, as well as to more overall changes in media and music economy in a complex relationship. Studying these two aspects is therefore useful for understanding broader changes in the cultural industries.

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The analyses of organization and communication practices show how the musicians bridge artistic and economic ambitions. A distinct manifestation of this is the conception of communication as a distinct form of labor. In this dissertation, I develop the argument that they do this by taking on a role as *ad hoc entrepreneurs* taking on responsibility and risk for their careers in order to be able to sustain a professional career as musicians. I use the adverb 'ad hoc' because these practices do not emerge as part of a formal strategy but rather in response to specific challenges. I emphasize that the motivations and responses that these musicians have to similar challenges are diverse and multi-facetted, and that this new role as ad hoc entrepreneur is conditioned by digital media.

The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into three main parts.

Following the introductory *Chapter 1*, *Chapter 2* addresses the methodological issues of the dissertation, and focuses in particular on the use of case studies. As a part of this, the criteria used for selecting cases for the empirical case studies are outlined.

Part one reviews existing research with relevance for studying the professional practices of middle-layer musicians in digital media and elaborates key concepts. The topic is placed at the intersection between three different research fields represented in three separate chapters. *Chapter 3* reviews literature on the organization of the music industries, with particular focus on the historical developments of industry structure as well as scholarly understandings of these structures. *Chapter 4* focuses on the nature of work in the cultural industries, and gives particular emphasis to the art-commerce relation and the employment conditions in the music industries. *Chapter 5* reviews research about the digital media landscape with a particular focus on forms of online sociality and the consequences for musicians. These three chapters in part two constitute the theoretical framework that forms the underlying basis for my analysis.

Part two analyzes the structural change in the music industries since the advent of digital distribution of music and the consequences of these changes for middle-layer musicians. *Chapter 6* analyzes organizational changes in the music industries at a macro level. The chapter analyzes revenue from different music industries and argues that there has been a significant shift in revenue streams between industries, but that

the music business as a whole is not in crisis. Instead the complexity of the democratization of production and distribution in the music industries is introduced as an explanation of the challenges for middle-layer musicians. It is argued that digitalization might have given musicians greater freedom to pursue their artistic goals, but that they are simultaneously struggling with an increased competition from amateurs as well as a record labels' reluctance to invest in new artists.

Chapters 7 to 12 present empirical case studies of four different middle-layer musicians from Copenhagen and Boston. The focus of the case studies is the professional practices of the artists. Particularly the way they organize their professional activities and how they cope with the challenges and opportunities offered in the digital media landscape. Although all four cases have the same overall focus, they also reflect a diversity of practices. Each case is therefore presented with its own idiosyncratic focus within the overall analytical frame.

Part three further develops the analytical themes of the empirical analyses. *Chapter 13* develops the understanding of middle-layer musicians' organizational practices in relation to earlier conceptions of the role of artists in the cultural industries. It is argued that the practices analyzed in the case studies constitute a significant shift in the social roles of middle-layer musicians. This new role is conceptualized as *ad hoc entrepreneurs*, and it is argued that it emerges in response to structural changes in the music and media industries, but is shaped by the ideologies and values of creative work. *Chapter 14* takes a broader perspective and discusses at a more general level how the introduction of new media can change social roles. Drawing on Joshua Meyrowitz's idea of 'feedback loops', it is analyzed how the organizational and media practices in the music industries mutually affect each other in feedback loops, and how these feedback loops work to establish a new structural equilibrium after the initial disruption caused by new media.

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Methodological Considerations

Methods and Objectives

This dissertation analyzes how digitalization has affected music industry structures before conducting case studies of individual musicians. These two perspectives call for different methods.

The analysis of the industry perspective is based to two types of empirical data: 1) economic data at the level of the central music industries (recoding, publishing, live), and 2) qualitative interviews with selected music industry professionals. The empirical case studies are based on field research in Copenhagen and Boston.

The Structural Organization of the Music Industries

The analysis of changing structural conditions in the music industries serves as a basis for analyzing case studies of how individual musicians adapt their organizational and communicational practices to these changes.

The conceptual focus of this first part of the analysis is to review existing sociological understandings of the music industries. Most theories and empirical studies about the music industries have roots in the pre-digital media landscape. Though media as well as industry actors sometimes refer to a 'digital revolution', it is necessary to question the common sense understandings of the consequences of digitalization. This is done by analyzing data aggregated on industry level by interest organizations and trade bodies within the specific industry, e.g. the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), The International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers

(CISAC), and the Danish collective rights management society (Koda), as well as estimates from music industry analysts and trade organizations. This is not unproblematic and we should have reservations about such data (Wikström 2013, loc. 1124). A major problem when analyzing the music economy is that the institutions and companies with access to data also have particular political and financial interests vested in the industry. As such, numbers are disclosed only if there is an expectation that public knowledge is in the interest of the institution or company compiling them. Furthermore, the methods for compiling and reporting these numbers differ significantly across industries as well as national borders. This makes it practically impossible to establish valid and reliable statistics that give a complete picture of the global music industries.

The empirical purpose of the industry analysis is not to give an exact valuation of individual music industries, but rather to identify economic changes. For this purpose, the analysis relays numbers from selected trade bodies, and the data are analyzed comparatively across national and industry boundaries. The preliminary findings of these analyses have then been developed and validated through presenting and discussing them with representatives of different music industry organizations. Preliminary findings have been presented at board meetings for IFPI Denmark and Dansk Musikforlæggerforening (Danish Music Publishers' Association), and at personal meetings with representatives from Koda and Dansk Live (Association for live venues and festivals in Denmark). In addition to this, the quantitative aspect of the analysis is complimented with both in-depth semi structured qualitative interviews and informal interviews with representatives from record companies (both major and independent), live venues, artist managers, contract counselors from the two Danish musicians' unions, and a freelance accountant specializing in musicians' economies. These interviews are relatively oblique in my analysis. This does not reflect that they are not important – in fact, some of these interviews have been crucial in drawing my attention to specific problematics – but such interviews have a risk of being based on anecdotal evidence, so as much as possible I have pursued quantitative indications of the tendencies or developments identified in interviews.

Conditions for Middle-Layer Musicians
It would be difficult to analyze all types of musicians representatively without either engaging in empirical work of a magnitude beyond the scope of this PhD project, or

compromising on the nuances and diversities in practices. I therefore focus specifically on middle-layer rock musicians.

In order to embrace the heterogeneity of practices, I have chosen to conduct this part of my research as empirical case studies. The cases are studied in their historical and everyday setting. This setting includes (but is not limited to) their band mates, professional partners (managers, record labels, etc.), audiences and the music scenes that they are part of. Doing cases studies of these musicians allows me to get an understanding of their complex and idiosyncratic practices and relate them to the conditions offered by their settings. But in order to serve a conceptual purpose, they need to be cases of something. In this dissertation, these musicians are all cases of how middle-layer musicians organize and use new communication technologies. But each of the cases also has its individual analytical frame, allowing me to explore the diversity in practices across the cases.

Thomas (2011) argues that a case study is a frame of study rather than a method in itself. Although this can be critiqued, it highlights that case studies provide flexible opportunities for combining multiple methods.

Qualitative interviews are used as the primary method because it is particularly well suited for understanding the lifeworlds of the interviewed from their perspective (Kvale 1997). However, I am also interested in how these lifeworlds manifest themselves and are affected by digital media. I have therefore sought to supplement the interviews with a methodological approach that integrated online practices. One such method is what Robert V. Kozinets calls *netnography*, which is an ethnographic approach that has been adapted to the specific conditions of online fieldwork. For Kozinets, the relevance of this approach comes primarily from the new settings for social interaction provided by networked media. Netnography is a systematic approach to online participant observation. Kozinets makes an important distinction between 1) research on *online communities*, which studies "some phenomenon directly relating to online communities and online culture itself, a particular manifestation of them, or some of their elements" (Kozinets 2010, p. 63), and 2) research on *communities online*, which "examine some extant general social phenomena whose social existence extends well beyond the Internet and online interactions, even though those interactions may play an important role with the group's membership" (Kozinets 2010, p. 64). Kozinets suggests that the former is best

studied with netnography as the primary focus, whereas the latter is best studied with netnography in a supporting or secondary role.

The practices of musicians in the present study are an example of the latter. Although online interactions with audiences and other scene members are integral to the role of professional musician, the music scenes studied in this dissertation extend well beyond the online interactions. Face-to-face interactions with colleagues, business partners and audiences are for instance an important part of life for these musicians. In order to be able to establish a holistic impression of the practices of the musicians, I therefore employ netnography as a supplement to in-depth qualitative interviews. For this I draw on data from participant observation of the musicians' media practices on social media sites, websites, webshops, as well as media texts (interviews, music videos, live recordings, etc.) disseminated through online media like blogs and online magazines.

Why Case Studies?

As mentioned briefly above, case study is not a method in itself (Thomas 2011, p. 9). It is a choice of what to study, as well as a choice of putting emphasis on the particularity and complexity of real-life circumstances.

> Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a 'real-life' context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods, and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practices and civil or community action. (Simons 2009, p. 21)

Gary Thomas' definition of case studies builds on Simons', but adds emphasis on case studies as comprised of two parts: an empirical subject and an analytical frame or object:

> Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an

> instance of a class of phenomena that provides an object – within which
> the study is conducted an which the case illuminates and explicates
> (Thomas 2011, p. 23)

The case study is particularly well suited for this research project because of its emphasis on in-depth understandings of complex and situated topics. And because it is not a method in itself but rather a choice of subject and object of the research, it allows for a flexible use of interdisciplinary methods.

There are scholarly discussions over the usefulness of case studies for generalization. Gary Thomas for instance distinguishes case studies from experiments and surveys, and argues that case studies are well suited for analyzing relationships and processes, but that studies aiming for generalization should use surveys, and studies searching for causation should use experiments (Thomas 2011, p. 11). But Bent Flyvbjerg has argued that this kind of reservations about case studies rest on misunderstandings about the value of context dependent knowledge, and the ability to generalize and build theory, from case studies (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 221)

Flyvbjerg challenges the natural science ideal among social scientists, and he argues that case studies were critical to the work of scientists like Newton, Einstein, Bohr and Darwin (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 226). When the aim is to provide as much information about a phenomenon as possible, strategic sampling is critical. Typical or average cases are often not the ones that are most rich in information. Flyvbjerg distinguishes between *random selection* and *information-oriented selection*, and further divide these into different types:

Strategies for the Selection of Samples and Cases	
Type of Selection	**Purpose**
A. Random selection	To avoid systematic biases in the sample. The sample's size is decisive for generalization.
1. Random sample	To achieve a representative sample that allows for generalization for the entire population.
2. Stratified sample	To generalize for specially selected subgroups within the population.
B. Information-oriented selection	To maximize the utility of information from small samples and single cases. Cases are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content.
1. Extreme/deviant cases	To obtain information on unusual cases, which can be especially problematic or especially good in a more closely defined sense.
2. Maximum variation cases	To obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome (e.g., three to four cases that are very different on one dimension: size, form of organization, location, budget).
3. Critical cases	To achieve information that permits logical deductions of the type, "If this is (not) valid for this case, then it applies to all (no) cases."
4. Paradigmatic cases	To develop a metaphor or establish a school for the domain that the case concerns.

Figure 1: Strategies for the Selection of Samples and Cases (Flyvbjerg 2006, p. 230)

As illustrated in figure 1 above, Flyvbjerg distinguishes between *samples* (connected to random selection) and *cases* (connected to information-oriented selection), which helps emphasize that the choice of case study is also a choice of information-oriented selection.

This implies a basic distinction between what Ragin (1992) calls variable-oriented and case-oriented approaches. The variable-oriented approach specifies relevant variables based on theoretical concepts, and collects data on these variables that is understood by examining patterns of covariation across cases in the data set. The case-oriented approach puts focus on cases rather than variables, and studies "how different features or causes fit together in individual cases" (Ragin 1992, p. 5).

There has been much research on music industries and digitalization but little on how the implications for how musicians organize their professional activities and how they communicate. The complexity of the developments that shape conditions for musicians makes it relevant with an approach that facilitates understanding how different developments fit together in individual cases. This makes the case oriented approach relevant to this dissertation.

The case-oriented approach's focus on the case rather than variables has consequences for the structure of this dissertation. Instead of focusing on specific perspectives of the professional practices of the musicians and comparing them across the cases, this dissertation analyzes the idiosyncratic practices of each of the four cases that are found to be most relevant for the study. This also means that the structure of each of the case studies is different. This limits the ability to contrast the cases to each other, but enhances the ability to understand the context and interplay between different influences in the individual cases. This way of structuring the analysis also has the effect that it leaves the question of what the subject is a *case of* open throughout the process of analyzing and writing up the case. This is in line with Becker's argument that the question of what the case is a *case of* should be posed again and again during the research process because it challenges preconceptions that might otherwise hamper conceptual development (Ragin 1992, p. 6).

Though the research in this sense starts out without a clear notion of the case, this does not mean that the selection of cases cannot be done reflectively. Even if the notion of what the case is a case of is vague, it is still possible to think about what type objectives the study has.

Gary Thomas (2011) provides a frame for thinking about this. He suggests a simple distinction between types of case studies. He distinguishes only between three types of case subjects, based on the kind of knowledge needed to understand the 'how' and 'why' of the phenomenon of which the cases are 'cases of': 1) A key case, which is a

good example of something; a classic or exemplary case. 2) An outlier case, which shows something interesting because of its difference from the norm. 3) A local knowledge case, which is an example of a personal experience for further exploration (Thomas 2011, p. 77).

Thomas suggests that these very wide categories of *subjects* are only the starting point for classification. Reviewing categorizations of case studies by different authors (Bassey 1999; Merriam 1988; Mitchell 2006; Stake 1995; De Vaus 2001; Yin 2009), he argues that the different classifications are based on thinking about the *purpose*, *approach* and *process* of the case studies.

From the review of categorizations, Thomas identifies five different purposes of case studies: Intrinsic, instrumental, evaluative, explanatory or exploratory (Thomas 2011, p. 97). Having considered the purpose of the study, Thomas suggests thinking about how the study is carried out. He distinguishes between five broad approaches to case studies: testing a theory, building a theory, drawing a picture, experimental and interpretative (Thomas 2011, p. 111). Finally, Thomas suggests considering the process of the case study. He identifies two overall structures: single case or multiple case studies, and distinguishes between six ways of going about the process of doing the case studies: Nested, Parallel, Sequential, Retrospective, Snapshot and Diachronic (Thomas 2011, p. 137).

For this dissertation I have chosen to use Thomas' categorization of case studies as a point of departure because it provides a more flexible frame for describing the approach than the one outlined by Flyvbjerg. On the following pages I will present the cases, and describe the thinking that has informed my selection and analysis of the cases.

Qualitative Interviews

The case studies draw on in-depth qualitative interviews as the primary empirical method. This has been chosen because the focus of the dissertation is on understanding the complex interplay between the influence of external factors like the introduction of new media and changing industry organization, as well as the internal motivations behind choosing specific ways of responding to these challenges.

Kvale describes twelve aspects of the form of understanding in qualitative research interviews, which outline interviews as concerned with interpreting the meaning of central themes in the life world of the subject through nuanced descriptions and with a focus on specificity rather than general opinions. Furthermore, it is focused on particular themes, but not with non-standardized questions (Kvale 1997, p. 41).

These aspects are reflected in the way empirical data from the four cases are studied and analyzed in this dissertation. The focus of the case studies is on the personal and everyday practices in the *life world* of the musicians studied. The level of understanding aims not only at describing what these musicians do, but also the motivations for doing so. In this sense, there is an interest in understanding the *meaning* of these practices.

The data gathered and analyzed through the interviews in this dissertation are *qualitative, descriptive and specific* in the sense that they are focused on providing detailed and nuanced descriptions of the specific practices of the individual musician that is not aimed at generalization through quantification, and with a focus on themes that are relevant to that specific case. Because the importance of different themes differs from case to case, the interviews (and the analysis of them) also differ.

The approach to interviews as well as the analysis has been open in the sense that understandings and categorizations have emerged from the data rather than from preconceived theoretically formed categorizations, and in that sense they are what Kvale calls *'deliberately naïve'*. However, though there has been an openness to new conceptions and perspectives, the interviews were all guided by a *focus* on the dissertation's two main themes: professional organization and media practices. As the case studies will show, this led to the inclusion of particular aspects in some of the cases that are not represented in the other cases. For instance the notion of non-generic transmedia storytelling in the case of Rasmus Stolberg and the focus on building multiple revenue streams in the case of Ellis Paul.

The aspects of *ambiguity, change, sensitivity, interpersonal situation and positive experience* are concerned with the interview situation. These aspects were addressed in this research process. However it is worth noting here that these musicians, unlike the typical interviewee, have considerable experience with being interviewed. Despite this, the interviews with the musicians from the case studies still featured these aspects to a varying degree. However, this was also an issue that to some extent guided

the selection of cases as some interviewees were reluctant to let go of the control that they are trained in retaining. These interviews displayed little ambiguity, didn't produce new insights for the interviewee, and were probably experienced as yet another interview rather than a positive experience. When the interviews were successful in overcoming these challenges, it was, however, typically because of the sensitivity and interpersonal connection between me as an interviewer, and the musicians I interviewed.

It is therefore also important to note that three of the four interviews that form the basis of the case studies were done face-to-face in the homes or local cafés of the musicians. The fourth interview was done by phone because of a busy touring schedule. The musicians interviewed in Copenhagen were all recruited through my personal and professional network in the Danish music industry. They were either acquaintances or recommended or introduced to me by mutual acquaintances. The interviews with the American musicians were carried out during a three-month stay as Visiting Scholar at Northeastern University in Boston, MA. Because I didn't have a similarly strong industry network there, I recruited interviewees through the few contacts in the music industry I was able to establish through introductions from colleagues at Northeastern University, but I also recruited interviewees through informal talks with musicians before and after concerts at local music venues.

The Cases

Selection Criteria

As mentioned earlier, examining a case does not constitute a case study; it has to be a *case of* something. This 'something' is the analytical frame. The subject (the case) provides a practical, historical unit that can be analyzed. But without a theoretically guided object of analysis, they run the risk of being just anecdotes or flat descriptions (Thomas 2011). This dissertation has followed Becker's recommendation (outlined above) to continually ask the question "what is this a case of?" and not settling on an answer until late in the process. In this context, it is important to note that though the question is answered at this early stage of the dissertation, it has only been settled upon in the final stages of the research process.

The four cases for this dissertation were selected from a pool of in-depth interviews with musicians in Copenhagen (Denmark) and Boston, MA (United States) according to the overall category that Flyvbjerg (2006) calls information-oriented selection. They were chosen because I expected them to provide rich information and reflect the diversity of practices among this type of musicians, while still all being cases of the same phenomenon. In this sense, all four are cases of the dissertation's main research question: how middle-layer rock musicians are shaping their professional practices in response to the evolving media landscape. This is the overall analytical frame. But each of the cases also has its individual analytical frame, allowing me to explore the diversity in practices across the cases.

- The first case (Rasmus Stolberg and his band Efterklang) is a case of middle-layer artists creating a mediated persona through transmedia storytelling, as well as a case of artists that have adapted to changing networked media while sticking to, and continuously developing, a DIY approach to professional organization.

- The second case (Jens Skov Thomsen and his band Veto) is a case of artists responding to the changing music economy by adapting different forms of organization to balance their pursuit of economic security and artistic control, as well as a case of a band that has moved from an independent label to a major label to achieve these goals.

- The third case (Brian Barthelmes and his bands Tallahassee and Forts/Gainesville) is a case of how musicians cultivate and exploit personal and professional networks, and how online communication is used to extend these connections to translocal scenes.

- The fourth case (the singer-songwriter Ellis Paul) is a case of how a career as musician has evolved in an organizational sense from self-releasing in the beginning of the 1990s, to being on a large independent label and choosing a DIY approach after the downturn of the recording industry. Furthermore, it is a case of how digitalization has opened for alternative business models to supplement recordings, concerts and publishing.

Using Thomas' (2011) categorization of kinds of case studies, the cases chosen for this dissertation can be defined as *key cases* with an *exploratory* purpose, an *illustrative* approach, and a *nested* multiple case process.

I have chosen *key cases* because my general aim is to produce knowledge about how digitalization affects conditions for middle-layer artists in general, and I find indie/alternative rock artists to be a good example of such artists, as a lot of musicians that play this type of music are middle-layer artists and a lot of middle-layer artists represent these genres. Arguably, the anti-mainstream ethos of these music cultures (among both artists and audiences) underpins this structure.

The exploratory *purpose* is primarily motivated by the lack of research about the communication and organization practices of middle-layer musicians in general, as well as the impact of digitalization on these conditions specifically. As a consequence of this, the case studies are preceded by an analysis of the structural changes in the music industries, and followed by analysis of the nature of these conditions. The exploratory purpose also shapes both fieldwork and analysis as the focus has not been on testing hypotheses, but rather on exploring possible understandings of the musicians' practices. This leads to an analysis, which is less stringent and has a greater openness to new insights.

I have chosen an illustrative *approach* to be able to highlight specific characteristics that emerged during the preliminary round of interviews and observations. This enables me to analyze these characteristics in depth. However, it should also be noted that these characteristics only highlight some of the practices that could be found among middle-layer musicians. Other case studies might very well identify other characteristics to supplement the ones I analyze in this dissertation. The illustrative approach manifests itself in the case studies by giving room for thick description of central themes within the individual cases.

Finally, the case study is conducted as a nested multiple case study as *process* because this enables me to illustrate the complexity and diversity of practices among artists. As will hopefully become clear, the four musicians have sometimes made radically different choices in pursuit of the same goals and based on similar ideals. Other times they have chosen similar practices in pursuit of different goals. By analyzing four individual cases (the four musicians) within an analytical frame where they all are a part of a case of middle-layer musicians, it is possible to explore and analyze the object

in all of its complexity. In practice, this process manifests itself in the dissertation by a distinction between two layers of analysis of the cases. First the four cases are analyzed individually. Thereafter, the general analytical themes are developed further in two chapters, which broadens the analytical frame to the overall case of professional organization and media practices of middle-layer rock musicians.

Two of the cases come from the music scenes in Copenhagen (Denmark) and two from the music scenes in Boston, MA (United States). The cases have been selected from a pool of 21 in-depth interviews with professional middle-layer musicians and music industry professionals. The informants for these interviews were recruited from a large number of informal interviews done before or after concerts, at music industry receptions and conferences, or through introduction from my personal network among musicians and music industry professionals.

I initially intended to set up interviews through snowball sampling. However I encountered similar problems to the ones described by Baym (Baym 2012). Only few of the people I interviewed referred me to other people, and many of the attempts to set up interviews failed. Like Baym, I gradually got the impression that there were two primary reasons for this. First the fact that to professional musicians giving interviews is a part of their work tasks and interviews that don't have promotional value tend not to be given priority. Second, this impression was substantiated by the fact that my few attempts with contacting musicians through their managers (who are typically the contacts listed on bands' websites) were rarely responded to, and the few responses all indicated that the band was too busy to participate. The interviews were therefore to a large extent set up through my personal and professional network, though I also set up a few interviews as follow-up to some of the informal interviews mentioned earlier.

This sampling method leads to shortcomings in terms of the genre, age, race and gender of the informants. Being a white well-educated male from Copenhagen, most of my personal and professional networks are similar. The same characteristics tend to be true for the 21 people that I interviewed only three of them were female, all were white, most were in their thirties, and many had a college background. The musicians mostly played what could loosely be labeled indie rock or alternative rock, though some were primarily jazz musicians. As the difficulties of recruiting participants tended to lead me in this direction I decided early to narrow my focus to middle-layer musicians playing indie rock.

In this dissertation, the term 'indie' is not understood in the traditional, technical, sense: as music that is produced and distributed through independent labels. Instead I use it as reference to a set of aesthetic preferences that put particular emphasis on original compositions, band collectivity, and stylistic sophistication (Holt 2013). In addition, the term includes "obscure artists on major labels, and sometimes relatively well-known artists who nevertheless represent a kind of authenticity or artistic integrity to their most devoted acolyte" (Grazian 2013, p. 147). In this sense, what binds these musicians – as well as the scenes they represent – together are the shared values and ideologies that build on somewhat traditionalist notions of authenticity and artistic value.

Part One:

Concepts and Literature Review

3

Music Industries

This chapter introduces existing research about the music industries. It lays out the historical development of conceptions of the music industries since the middle of the twentieth century. The chapter is structured in three parts: First, I introduce how the notion of production and distribution as an industrial process has been conceived and developed theoretically from the seminal work of Adorno and Horkheimer (Adorno 1941/1990; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2006), over Hirsch's filter flow model (Hirsch 1972), to more recent understandings (Hesmondhalgh 2012; Negus 2011; Wikström 2013). I focus particularly on the distinction between different industries within the music business, and relate the music industries to other creative industries. Second, I focus more specifically on conglomeration and vertical integration of major music companies (Frith 2001; Negus 2011) and the tension between this development and the notion of independence (of artists and indie labels) (Hesmondhalgh & Meier, 2015). Third, I explore how digitalization has affected the business models of particularly the recording industry. For this I draw on Wikström's (2013) analysis of how digitalization has caused an 'option value blurring' which have blurred the distinction between how the music industry promotes and sells recorded music in the digital age.

The main argument of the chapter is that the music industries should be understood within the larger framework of cultural industries. As such they produce non-material goods with non-utilitarian functions, which increases volatility. This chapter explores how the music industries have tackled this over time. The theories outlined in this chapter will be developed further in the light of digitalization in chapter five.

Conceptions of the Music Industries

The conception of the production of music as something that takes place within an industry is usually attributed to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer from the Frankfurter School of Critical Theory. Adorno and Horkheimer (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2006) use the term 'culture industry' to describe the way production and distribution of popular music as cultural commodities was rationalized. Although Adorno acknowledged that a certain degree of human craftsmanship was needed, the basic argument was that the music industry spawned music that was repetitive, standardized (though 'pseudo-individualized'), and 'pre-digested' (Adorno 1941/1990). This pessimistic and elitist understanding of the culture industries was challenged in the 1970s by scholars like Bernard Miège (Miège 1979), who nuanced the understanding of the culture industry as an arena for a dynamic struggle between commerce and art. During this period, the term was furthermore changed from singular to the plural 'cultural industries' (Wikström 2013, p. 259).

Interestingly, the conceptions of the cultural industries and what is produced here still have considerable similarities to the definitions used in the 1970s. Paul M. Hirsch for instance tentatively defined cultural products as: "'nonmaterial' goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an esthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function" (Hirsch 1972, p. 641). Hirsch's primary contribution to the conception of cultural industries was however to draw attention to the organization of the production process, and most notably the overproduction that cultural industries rely on.

Hirsch analyzes production in the cultural industry as based on a series of filter processes in which products are filtered out by gatekeepers within production organizations, media, and retail. This means that the cultural organizations are seen as rationalizing subsystems within the cultural industries.

> Cultural organizations constitute the managerial subsystem of the industry systems in which they must operate. From a universe of innovations proposed by 'artists' in the 'creative' (technical) subsystem, they select ('discover') a sample of cultural products for organizational sponsorship and promotion. A distinctive feature of the cultural industry systems at the present time is the organizational segregation of functional units and subsystems (Hirsch 1972, p. 644)

In record companies, Hirsch argues that 'talent scouts' constitute the link between the heavily segregated artistic creators and the managerial subdivisions of the industry (Hirsch 1972, p. 644). Hirsch also notes that the form of organization that resembles "craft administration of production", where companies seek to reduce the fixed overhead costs by contracting artists on a royalty basis (with minimal advance payouts), which means that their payment is contingent on the success of their product (Hirsch 1972, p. 645). Another characteristic of the craft administration in cultural industries was that segregation was that the segregation of the industries at a general level was carried over to the individual organization in the sense that the 'input boundary' (personified e.g. by 'talent scouts') was relatively autonomous and professional, and the output boundary (e.g. marketing and distribution) was highly bureaucratized.

Today's understandings of the cultural industries are not radically different from these early conceptions. Hesmondhalgh defines cultural industries as "[...] industries that are based on the industrial production and circulation of texts and centrally reliant on the work of symbol creators" (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 20), which is not far from Hirsch's definition. However, one aspect has changed considerably. Whereas the early conceptions of the cultural industries rest more or less explicitly on the assumption that the audience was 'cultural dupes' that were easily manipulated, modern understandings tend to emphasize that consumer behavior, although often irrational, is not as indiscriminate as the bureaucratic organization of marketing and distribution might seem to suggest. As Keith Negus phrases it:

> Enough research has been done to show that the reception and consumption of cultural items is not a passive process, but is part of the way in which sounds and images are given meaning [...] Artists are commercially successful because audiences have made them so, and as the act of consumption (like the act of production) involves a range of ethical, aesthetical and emotional investments (rather than a rational utilitarian choice), there is always something more than just the market exchange value involved in the relationship between the producers and consumers of commercial pop music. (Negus 2011, p. 153)

According to Simon Frith, there are two striking consequences of the way the record companies seek to organize a bureaucratic business building on the irrationality of both the supply and demand side of the music industry. The first (which was also

alluded to by Hirsch) is that more than 90% of the products produced are failures in economic terms, but that the losses of the failures are more than made up for by the profit from the few successes. The second is that there is a tension between record companies and artists as well as between record companies and consumers The underlying assumption of this tension is that record companies will try to rip off musicians (Frith 2001, p. 33).

The music industries are just one part of the cultural industries. Hesmondhalgh argues that other cultural industries include broadcasting, film industries, print and electronic publishing, video and computer games, Web design, and advertising, marketing and public relations (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 17). Although these industries have distinct dynamics, they are also interconnected in complex ways. To some extent because they compete for the same resources: a limited pool of consumer income, a limited pool of advertising revenue, a limited amount of consumption time, and skilled creative and technical labor (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 17). The shared characteristics of the products produced, combined with the competition for the same resources is the main argument for understanding cultural industries as a sector.

In recent years, the term 'cultural industries' have been often been replaced by terms like 'creative industries' (Caves 2000) or 'experience industries' (stemming from Pine & Gilmore, 1998), but as Wikström argues, these definitions can be criticized for being too wide, and to put too much emphasis on the processes rather than the products produced, which undermines the notion of an industry (Wikström 2013, loc. 311).

Although the music industry is often referred to in singular, there are actually several interrelated music industries. Exactly how many, and how they are delineated varies. Frith defines the music industry as:

> *A rights industry*, dependent on the legal regulation of the ownership and licensing of a great variety of uses of musical works
>
> *A publishing industry,* bringing those works to the public but itself dependent on the creativity of musicians and composers
>
> *A talent industry*, dependent on the effective management of those composers and musicians, through the use of contracts and the development of a star system

> *An electronics industry,* dependent on the public and domestic use of various kinds of equipment (Frith 2001, p. 33)

This definition focuses on the different aspects of monetization of music. A similar definition is used by Wikström, who builds on Negus' description of the recording industry as "concerned with developing global personalities which can be communicated across multiple media: through recordings, videos, films, television, magazines, books and via advertising, product endorsement and sponsorship over a range of consumer merchandise" (Negus 2011, p. 1) and defines the music industry as consisting of "those companies concerned with developing musical content and personalities which can be communicated across multiple media" (Wikström 2013, loc. 818)

Although these definitions are useful for understanding the mediated forms of music, they tend to collude the recording industry with the music industry at the expense of particularly the live industry.

Others have pointed to a more basic distinction between the recording industry, the publishing industry, and the live music industry (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 17; Rogers 2013, p. 15). In this dissertation I too have chosen to opt for this simple distinction of industries. This is primarily because it I have found it to be closest to the distinctions made in the industry on a daily basis, and therefore also the best suited for analysis as industry data are typically compiled along these lines. This distinction furthermore corresponds to significantly different areas of contact with other cultural industries.

- *The recording industry* has significant contact with electronic industries as well as advertising, marketing and public relations as they rely on these industries for distribution and monetization of their products

- *The publishing industry* is more closely related to the advertising, film and broadcasting industries, as these are significant areas to exploit performance rights and licensing

- *The live industry* is related to experience industries that are not part of the narrow definition of cultural industries, such as tourism and hospitality

Although these industries have distinct features and relationships to other industries, they also share significant characteristics. Wikström emphasizes that we should understand the three industries as integrated (Wikström 2013, loc. 835). The integrated processes of the music industries have been conceptualized in various models. Leyshon suggests a model in which the music economy is built around a series of sequential processes within four overlapping networks: a creativity network, a reproduction network, a distribution network, and a consumption network (see figure 2). Though Leyshon uses the term 'networks', it is primarily the creativity part that has a network-like structure, whereas the other parts have a more linear structure. Wikström therefore suggests understanding this model as a "fairly traditional value chain" (Wikström 2013, loc. 835).
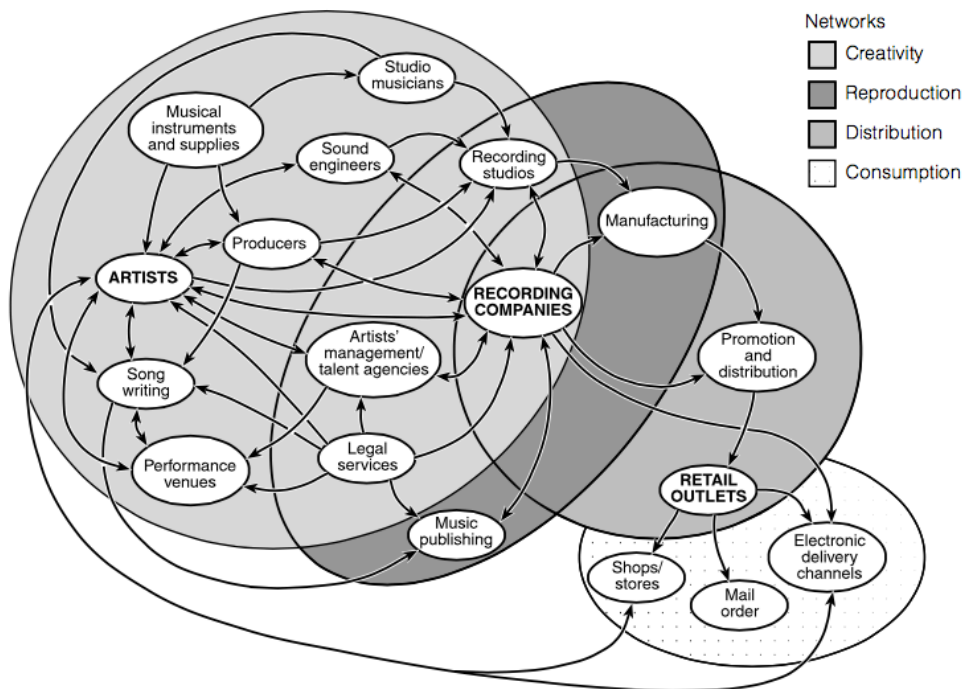

Figure 2: Music Industry Networks (Source: Leyshon 2001,
p. 61 in Wikström 2013, loc. 835)

Again, this model gives special value to the recording industry. Although the publishing and live industries are represented (as part of the 'creativity' and 'reproduction' networks), these functions are represented as subordinate to the central movement from artists, over record companies, to retail. This arguably reflects that the development of musical content and personalities for communication through multiple media channels (Wikströms definition of the music industries) primarily takes place within record companies. As I will analyze more thoroughly in a later chapter, this centrality of record companies have been challenged by digitalization, which has caused a shift in revenue streams away from sales of recorded music, and towards publishing and live industries. It therefore also becomes increasingly important to keep in mind that the music industries are more than just the business of selling records.

Vertical Integration and Conglomeration

Over the years, a few major international corporations have increasingly dominated the music industries. These corporations have been characterized by their control of resources for production and distribution of music (Frith 2001; Negus 2011; Wikström 2013). The way of securing such control has changed over the years, though it has generally been a way of dealing with the risks associated with the failure-driven market outlined earlier. Until the end of the 1970s, this was sought through owning as much of the value chain as possible (instrument manufacturing, publishing, concert halls, discos, retail, magazines, etc.), but as the American recording industry hit a downturn in the late 1970s, these companies increasingly sought to reduce risk by shifting risk to external entities (Frith 2001, p. 48). Negus describes this as a process in which

> In order to deal with the geographical expansion, and the increasingly complex artistic and commercial decisions involved in putting the sounds and images of pop together [...], the major corporations have reorganized and adopted more flexible working arrangements; based on internal subdivisions and a complexity of internal connections which has resulted in webs of major and minor companies (Negus 2011, p. 19)

According to Frith, the result is an industry that has ownership of rights and musical distribution as its core. Whereas the less bureaucratic activities like content creation,

talent spotting, and mapping of new markets are performed by independent operators (Frith 2001, p. 49). During the 1990s major labels relied heavily on the practice of 'upstreaming'. Major labels had, since the 1950s, used independent labels for talent spotting. However these independent labels were increasingly incorporated under the ownership of major labels – sometimes with a significant degree of autonomy, and sometimes effectively operated merely as different brands or product categories (Wikström 2013, loc. 1127). In this sense, independent labels denote as much an aesthetic and ideological stance, as a form of organization. Hesmondhalgh and Meier suggest that after the digitalization, it makes sense to distinguish between two types of music independence:

> The first involves fairly well-established large independents [...] many of them with close financing, distribution and other connections to the majors, selling various versions of alternative music, some but not that much of it distinguishable from the products of major record companies. The second is a world of amateur and precarious semi-professional musical production, including the continuing world of underground scenes and micro-independent institutions. (Hesmondhalgh & Meier, 2015, p. 447)

Except for a period between the 1950s and 1970s, vertical integration and conglomeration has traditionally been less dominant in the live industry than within the recording and publishing industries. We have, however, in recent years, seen the emergence of large international corporations, which have their starting point in the live music industry. Because of their increasing power, Wikström chose to include the live music production company Live Nation Entertainment, as well as SONY/ATV Music Publishing in his presentation of the world's largest music companies (Wikström 2013, loc. 1161). Although he could arguably also have included other large live music companies like AEG Live and SFX, the inclusion of Live Nation is significant. Wikström shows how Live Nation Entertainment shares organizational characteristics with major labels. They were formed as a merger between the ticket sales company Ticketmaster and concert producer Live Nation (which was spun off from Clear Channel, a company specializing in radio broadcast and outdoor advertising). Live Nation Entertainment is a vertically integrated company which is one of the largest venue operators (Wikström 2013, loc. 1310), while also organizing events, selling tickets (Ticketmaster), and managing artists, thus capitalizing from the whole live music value chain (Holt 2010). In general this development can be seen as a

result of the growing economic importance of the live music industry (Frith 2007; Holt 2010).

The Music Industries Post Digitalization

The development within the live music industry is just one indication that the music economy has developed rapidly since the turn of the millennium. This development is still ongoing, so any account of the 'new' conditions is likely to age fast. In this dissertation I build on Wikström's understanding of the impact of digitalization on the music industries in his book *The Music Industry: Music in the Cloud* (2013) (first edition published in 2009). Wikström's perspective is different from the ones discussed earlier in this chapter because his primary objective is not to account for the structure of the music industries per se, but to understand the dynamics of change caused by digitalization. He analyzes the changing music industries along three lines: 1) connectivity vs. control, 2) service vs. product, and 3) amateur vs. professional. First, he argues that there has been a shift in the economy from being based on controlling the audience's access to the music, as well as artists' access to the audience. With the Internet the audience and artists have principally free access to connect with each other, and the industry loses control with the information flows. Second, this loss of control leads to a market where it becomes difficult to sell music as a product. Instead music becomes monetized through business models that provide the service of helping the audience navigate the vast amount of information online. Third, the increased connectivity of the audience has led to a situation where non-professional content coexists with professional content on online media platforms.

Wikström argues that these developments have led to what he calls 'option value blurring'. Building on the concept of 'option value' (Varian & Shapiro, 1999), he argues that:

> In the old music economy, there existed a certain set of outlets whose purpose was to expose the artist to the audience, and a distinctively different set of outlets that was used to collect revenues from that audience. [...] Measured on an 'option value spectrum', these two sets have to be significantly distanced from each other, otherwise the consumers will not be motivated to spend money buying the same music they can get free via another medium. [...] improved connectivity has

> damaged the music firms' ability to control the flow of music and, of course, any other kind of digital information. As a consequence, numerous new media outlets have increased the fragmentation of the audience and blurred the distinction between promotion outlets and distribution outlets (Wikström 2013, loc. 1422)

This development has had significant effects on the organization of the music industries in general and the recording industry in particular. I suggest here that the process Wikström points out is not limited to the distinction between promotion and distribution. The blurring of boundaries applies to all the integrated networks (creativity, reproduction, distribution, consumption) of the music business identified by Leyshon (2001), leading to less segregation between individual industries. Because middle-layer rock musicians often have responsibility for several of these areas, the consequence is that the boundaries between their different professional activities are blurred.

Wikström's analysis gives little attention to changes outside the corporate recording industry. Jim Rogers (2013) and Johansson and Larsson (Johansson & Larsson, 2009) have nuanced the perception of a music business in crisis by showing how the live music and publishing industries have been growing in the post digitalization years. I will return to this perspective in chapter 6. At this point I will just note that the ongoing changes in the music industries are not necessarily of such a revolutionary character as we are sometimes led to believe by media coverage. Rogers argues that the assumption that digitalization has caused fundamental upheaval is wrong, and that "Forces of change have been diluted by forces of continuity" (Rogers 2013, p. 177).

In sum, this dissertation builds on a conception of the music industries as embedded in the larger framework of cultural industries. The basic music industries are 1) a recording industry, 2) a publishing industry, and 3) a live music industry. These industries are structured around the development of musical content and personalities for communication through multiple media channels (Wikström 2013). This means that these industries deal with industry-like production of nonmaterial goods with non-utilitarian functions, which adds an irrational element that increases volatility. The industries have therefore continuously adopted strategies for reducing risk, which have led to increased vertical integration and conglomeration. Although digitalization seems to have blurred the boundaries between industry networks, it has not

fundamentally changed this. However the loss of control over information has led to a shift from a perception of music as a product to new ways of selling music as a service.

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4

Musicians at Work

Artists, songwriters, musicians and producers are often peripheral in the literature on music industries. This is not because their contribution is not recognized, but rather a manifestation of the understanding of their contributions as something that cannot be rationalized in an industrial manner (see e.g. Adorno 1941/1990; Hirsch 1972; Negus 2011). Even in Adorno's rather dystopic analysis of the music industry, he argues that "[...] the production of popular music can be called 'industrial' only in its promotion and distribution, whereas the act of producing a song-hit still remains in a handicraft stage" (Adorno 1941/1990, p. 306). This is still the general perception in music industry research as well as the broader field of research in the creative industries (see e.g. Banks 2010; Holt & Lapenta 2010; Toynbee 2000).

In particular, the role of middle-layer musicians in the music industries are underresearched. It seems that these musicians occupy a middle ground between music industry research, which has traditionally been primarily the domain of sociologists and has had a bias towards management perspectives, and the study of music making, which has been the domain of ethnomusicologists. The previous chapter represents the first perspective. The representatives of the latter perspective (e.g. Bennett 1980; Cohen 1991; Finnegan 1989/2007) have often taken an ethnographic approach to the practices of music creation in local communities and on local scenes, emphasizing music making as a way of life – a social activity. Although the music industry is present in these studies, the musicians studied are not generally integrated in it.

In recent years some attention has been given to the middle-layer musicians, although they don't use that term (Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Kruse 2003; Mjøs 2012). However, though these studies deal with more successful musicians, they tend to carry

with them a focus on the social aspects, particularly the importance of the geography of music scenes.

Mike Jones takes his own career as a starting point and motivation for an analysis of the structural conditions for artists in the music industry (Jones 2003, 1997).

Zwaan and ter Bogt (Zwaan & ter Bogt 2009) base their analysis of musicians' conditions for career entry on interviews with A&R managers. Though they take a different approach, they reach similar results to earlier studies (Jones 1997; Peterson & Ryan 1983); that strong professional networks optimize the likelihood of success, and that further importance is connected to live performance, quality of music, musical skills, appearance, motivation, and media and audience appeal (Zwaan & ter Bogt 2009, p. 97).

The following section focuses more specifically on understandings of musicians' labor in relation to more general theories of work in the cultural industries. The section begins with conceptions of musical labor, which cannot be reduced to abstract value (Ryan 1992). It then outlines understandings of the tension between art and commerce, and the role of creative autonomy as both a normative ideological principle and a structural precondition for production within the cultural industries. Finally, it presents research on how these conditions have been reflected in musicians' employment conditions.

Music as Labor

This dissertation investigates conditions for professional middle-layer musicians, and in doing so, it focuses mainly on aspects of music making that are to some extent reliant on an understanding of music as something connected to labor. Popular music produced in this field nonetheless simultaneously takes the form of a cultural commodity and a work of art. There are two implications of this. First, there are different sets of value in play. As a minimum it makes sense to distinguish between artistic and commercial value. Second, artists are often driven by other motives than doing contracted labor. As Ryan phrases it, "The culture industry is explicable not as purely capitalist but only in its combination with art" (Ryan 1992, p. 14).

Ryan adopts Marx's distinction between the concrete labor of doing one's craft, and the abstract labor as a part of a social labor force (Ryan 1992, p. 42). The absence of this distinction for artists can be used to explain the struggle between art and commerce

> The structures of art make artists incompatible with the structures of capital. The employment of artists in whatever technical form necessitates recognising and preserving their named, concrete labour. They cannot be employed as labour-power, as anonymous production factors functioning under the sway of capital. (Ryan 1992, p. 44).

A specific implication of this is that the work of art is historically constituted and intentionally authored and therefore reliant on the identification of an author. This also means that the labor performed by the artists is not interchangeable with the work of other artists, and that the artist therefore cannot be understood as part of a more generalized labor force.

In many ways, Ryan's line of argumentation aligns with sociologist Howard Becker's understanding of the artist's role within what he calls an *Art World*. Becker was interested in the organization of cultural production and its effects on the artistic process and product, more than an understanding of the labor perspective. But exactly because music (as well as other forms of cultural labor) is not like the types of work (it can actually be fun), the distinction between music as an activity and music as a profession is very blurry. For Becker, art is produced within a social network where a plethora of activities have to be performed in order for the work of art to appear in its final form. This implies a complex division of labor in which only few tasks are usually considered 'artistic'.

> Participants in the making of art works, and members of society generally, regard some of the activities necessary to the production of a form of art as 'artistic', requiring the special gifts or sensibility of an artist. They further regard those activities as the core activities of art, necessary to make the work art rather than (in the case of objects) an industrial product, a craft item, or a natural object. (Becker 1982, p. 16)

Becker argues that the correlation between performing core activities in the production of art and being an artist also functions as an ideology. This ideology often

implies a notion of the artist as an individual with a special gift or talent for "spontaneous expression or sublime inspiration", and it creates confusion when artists adopt businesslike work habits (Becker 1982, p. 18).

In this sense, being a professional musician almost constitutes an ideological paradox between professional labor and artistic freedom. However, though the world of art commerce seem far apart, they still share an intimate relationship (Banks 2010, p. 253), which is significant for the practices of the middle-layer musicians studied later in this dissertation. This relationship is explored in the next section.

The Art-Commerce Relation

For academics, the concepts of creative autonomy as well as the demands and constraints of capital, have often been central in the critique of cultural industries. Adorno argued that the rationalization of production and distribution translated directly into structural standardization aimed at standard reactions (Adorno 1941/1990), which implies that the industrialization of music permeates aesthetic and moral foundations of musical labor. However, as Banks argues:

> [...] while much cultural work remains in service only to the accumulation imperative, cultural industries should not be understood as sites of a standardised and general exploitation, but as loci for a contestable and transformable political economy of work. (Banks 2010, p. 266)

Artistic autonomy has become an institutionalized aspect of production in cultural industries (Toynbee 2003). It is on one hand a normative ideological principle for artistic practices, and on the other hand a structural precondition for capitalist cultural production. This has important effects for work in the music industries. Negotiations over investment and risk-taking are often also negotiations that involve balancing economic incentives with artistic autonomy. In such negotiations, the commercial perspective is not an issue of exploitation, but rather a mutual agreement between artist and industry partners. To assume that the conditions of such an agreement are negotiated between two equal partners would, however, be ignorant. Even though music companies have lost their de facto role as gatekeepers, their bargaining position is usually significantly better than the artist's – especially if the artist has still to prove her artistic or commercial potential.

As a consequence of the centrality of media in the definition and distribution of the cultural knowledge, and thereby also subcultural capital, it can be fruitful to understand musicians as more than just producers of music. Music is produced, distributed and consumed across media platforms and in complex interplay with other art forms, and in that way, it might make more sense to think of musicians as media producers. This understanding is in line with the definition of the music industries as concerned with developing "musical content and personalities which can be communicated across multiple media" (Wikström 2013, loc. 818), outlined in the previous chapter.

But understanding popular musicians as media producers has implications for the art-commerce relation within popular music. On the one hand, it embeds popular music in the media industries, and thereby makes it contingent on the market dynamics governing production and distribution within these industries. On the other hand, being to some extent dependent on media coverage only strengthens the ideological tension between artistic and commercial aspects of a musician's career. As Thornton has argued, the relation between subcultural capital and media is non linear. Although media are crucial in gaining subcultural capital, too much attention, or coverage from the wrong media outlets, can severely undermine the subcultural legitimacy of an artist. In this sense, there is a fine line between getting media 'hype' and 'selling out' (Thornton 1996, pp. 13-14).

Although cultural or subcultural capital might be crucial to attaining artistic legitimacy as well as for the self-understanding of the individual artist, being a professional musician also requires getting noticed and getting paid. These two aspects of musical labor are more easily explained through Bourdieu's concepts of economic and social capital.

The influence of economic capital on professional musicians' labor can be divided into two primary aspects. First, accumulation of economic capital is the basis of sustaining a professional career. Without sufficient monetary rewards for their labor, musicians are forced to make a living within other professions, and exercise music as amateurs. But in an industry where music as media product is the primary way of building an audience, access to economic capital becomes prerequisite to transforming musical ideas to media products through recording, mixing and mastering the music. As it is discussed in detail in chapter 6, digitization has significantly lowered these costs of

production, but even though the costs are not as high as just a decade ago, they still often represent a substantial economic investment.

The accumulation of social capital can be understood as a distinct form of labor for professional musicians. Viewing popular music as an integrated part of the media industries also implies that the labor connected with producing music is subject to significant differentiation and division of labor. At the same time, music is increasingly commodified as media products, which makes access to media gatekeepers (in traditional media) and strong personal connections with audiences and tastemakers (in digital media) an imperative for musicians that aspire to a professional career. Combined, these two tendencies show how social networks (both in size and strength of ties) are valuable assets for musicians. In the first case, they can be activated in locating and forming partnerships with actors that can help with the diverse task connected with producing and promoting the music. In the second case, they can be employed to create attention for the music.

Employment Conditions

The intertwining of art and commerce is echoed in the conditions under which the music is produced and marketed. The artist has substantial freedom to write and produce new songs and come up with creative material, but when it comes to the commercial aspects, freedom is significantly smaller, as this is much more precisely covered by contracts with music companies. Matt Stahl has developed the term *unfree masters* to explain this doubleness:

> The recording artist – the successful recording artist, in particular – is a double figure. On the one hand, she is a symbolic figure offered for our consumption, contemplation, and identification; she enacts forms of expression, autonomy, and desirability, seeming to encapsulate some of our society's most cherished virtues and values. On the other hand, she is a political and economic actor, a working person whose contractually governed relationship to her company is sometime one of real subordination. In this doubleness, the recording artist embodies a paradox: as an agent of self-expression under contract to a major entertainment conglomerate or a subsidiary company, the recording artist is both autonomous and the target of control. (Stahl 2013, loc. 35)

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Stahl explicitly deals with professional recording artists. When taking this perspective, it is important to note that the extent of contractual control is growing. The emergence of the 360-deal (and the less extensive 'multiple rights deal'), which will be dealt with more thoroughly in a later chapter, marks a significant change in the contractual relationship between artist and record company because it extends the contractual obligations to cover areas of the artist's career that were previously not included. As a measure to balance record company investment with potential returns if the artist is successful, the artist is expected to sign away income from these sources, and in extension of that, potentially also the freedom over aspects of their careers such as touring, synchronization and sponsorships.

The degree of contractual control over artists can definitely be understood as a case of exploitation of artists. They sign away artistic autonomy in return for becoming (hopefully) a valuable commodity – and thereby being able to earn a living from their music.

One way exploitation manifests itself is through the way record companies work with artists. As Mike Jones argues, the term 'artist development' as it has historically been carried out, is "[...] a process that is likely to be experienced by the pop act as anything but a pleasant way" (Jones 2003, p. 151). Industry professionals such as managers and A&Rs seek to mature the music, storytelling and persona of the artist to create a commodity that can create value (artistically and economically) on the market. In this process, Jones argues that the artist is structurally disempowered:

> The act cedes not only a vital degree of control to someone who is or becomes inculcated in the methods of the industry, but they also ensure their own separation from, and ignorance of, the very methods by which commodification takes place. (Jones 2003, p. 153)

Jones argues that this process of commodification actually starts when artists first start writing and producing music. They do so in relation to their experience with the kind of music they produce, and therefore "[...] create more than music, they create themselves as a pop act" (Jones 2003, p. 153). However, the process is increasingly formalized when artists enter into relationships with first a manager, and later a record company.

Whether this relation constitutes a case of exploitation can however be argued, and depends partly on how the relation is conceived. Matt Stahl argues that, artists work under conditions that appear like those of a subcontractor. They work independently to deliver a more or less clearly defined product (a song, a recording, a finished master, etc.), and receive payment in lump sum and additional royalties if they are successful. They don't get wages or salary, and they control their own work schedule. But he also argues that to accept this appearance would be misleading. As he writes:

> It may be that the wealth and autonomy of many successful recording artists obscures the legal definition of major-label recording artists' work, but all that wealth and autonomy does not counteract the power of the companies for whom they work to use the employment contract to set the term on which they work. (Stahl 2013, loc. 1480)

However, as Negus argues, there is a 'lack of fit' between the macro structures of ownership and the cultural production that takes place within those structures:

> Proponents of the 'corporate control' model such as Adorno and Horkheimer certainly have a point about the way in which large corporations own the technical means of producing and distributing products and reap the economic rewards of the products created by staff. But what they neglect is the way in which cultural production is not simply a technical and economic activity. (Negus 1997b, pp. 94-95)

And, adding to Negus' point, Banks emphasizes non-economical values can sometimes be more powerful than economic values:

> [...] cultural production is a process part-filtered through the *actions of subjects*, ones embedded in particular communities, occupational cultures and motivated by a whole plethora of non-economic social values and political attitudes - ones that can moderate or even usurp corporate intentions. (Banks 2007, p. 40) [Italics in original]

In other words, the contractual control of record companies is focused primarily on the process of production and dissemination of music as products, and this builds on a creative production, which is not under direct corporate control, but rather created as part of a subjective process. In Becker's conception, this is what makes it art in contrast to other commodities that derive their value through their utility value. In this

sense, it is hard to argue for the type of alienation typically associated with waged labor. However, as both Stahl (2013) and Jones (2005) emphasize, when record companies invest money and resources into artist development and recording, they are also prone to have very specific expectations of the finished product. In combination with the imbalance in power relations between artist and label, this easily leads to situations where artists – though principally autonomous – create their music within restrictions imposed by the record company.

In this sense digitalization has provided the basis for some artists to gain more artistic autonomy simply because record companies have lost their de facto monopoly on production and distribution of music it is possible to record and release music without the interference of a record company. As production and distribution of music is no longer subject to industry monopoly, recorded music as art is no longer contingent on recorded music as a commodity, and as a consequence, signing a recording contract is now more explicitly a commercial rather than an artistic choice. This disconnecting of commercial and artistic motivations for collaboration with a record company supplements the potential move towards levels of artistic autonomy for mid-range artists that were previously reserved for top-level stars with significant bargaining power.

Artistic and commercial motives might thus be disconnected and provide some artists greater artistic autonomy in their creative phase, but when the artist signs a contract with a record label, it is an active choice to become part of a commercial market. And in choosing this, they reinstate the corporate control for the full duration of their contract. It could even be argued that the levels of control that they subject themselves to have been intensified.

> The intensification of record companies' power over the labor of their star recording artists played an important role in the industry's strategies of recovery from its late 1970s downturn. Pivotal to this intensification were particular contractual terms: 'exclusivity', 'assignment', and 'duration'. (Stahl 2013, loc. 1496)

In this sense, the developments in industry organization and labor conditions for musicians are closely connected. The discussion of artistic autonomy sums up the general points in this chapter nicely: The labor of musicians exists in tension between art and commerce and between autonomy and control. The consequence is that the

labor conditions for musicians is defined by the tension that results from creative autonomy as being both a normative ideological principle and a structural precondition for industrial production of music.

5

The Digital Media Landscape

This chapter focuses on how communication is affected by the rise of networked media in general, and social media[1] specifically. The digital media landscape and social media are complex phenomena and have been researched from very different perspectives. This chapter is organized around four main themes, starting out with the most general understandings of cultures online and gradually closing in on the aspects most pertinent to this dissertation's focus on professional practices of musicians: 1) First, drawing on the writings of van Dijck, Jenkins and Benkler, I introduce basic understandings of what Jenkins call 'convergence culture', focusing particularly on user agency and the potential for information production. Second, I introduce Goffman's ideas about the 'performance of self' as a frame for understanding social situations and Meyrowitz's theory about how new media lead to a collapse of contexts and change social roles. I then explore how these ideas have been adapted to online communication – particularly how technological developments have made access to having a media voice ubiquitous and how that affects musicians in both positive and negative ways. Third, I show how the performance of self can be understood as a distinct form of labor in digital media, for professional media producers and common users alike. Finally, I introduce understandings of hoe these changes affect the professional and personal practices of musicians.

Because of the limited research literature on musicians' new media practices, this chapter extends the literature review by drawing on research from related fields of

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[1] The term 'social media' is often used, but seldom defined. For the sake of brevity, I will avoid the necessary discussion of whether it makes sense to distinguish between 'media' and 'social media'. Instead I note that 'social media' usually is used in reference to internet-based

communication and media studies in order to provide a framework for the dissertation's empirical work. The first sections of the chapter are therefore general in their scope, and make only limited direct reference to the practices of middle-layer musicians, whereas the final sections discuss the particular relevance for the musicians that are the objective of the dissertation.

Media Convergence and User Agency

The emergence of social media marks an important shift in online media from being channels of networked communication to becoming vehicles for networked sociality (Manovich 2009; van Dijck 2013). As these platforms have gained popularity they have also become integrated into capitalist markets.

> With the rapid growth of social media platforms came the incorporation of sites by existing and new information companies. Companies often appeared less interested in communities of users than in their data – a by-product of making connections and staying online. *Connectivity* quickly evolved into a valuable resource as engineers found ways to code information into algorithms that helped brand a particular form of online sociality and make it profitable in online markets – serving a global market of social networking and user generated content. (van Dijck 2013, p. 4) [Italics in original]

In this sense, social media are a manifestation of networked communication that is based on the form of sociality that Henry Jenkins conceptualizes as 'convergence culture', which emerges as a result of the relationship between media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence (Jenkins 2006, p. 2). Jenkins defines media convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins 2006, p. 2). Jenkins opposes the idea of media convergence as something primarily technical. Instead he perceives media convergence as preconditioned on the active participation of consumers. However, he also emphasizes that this does not mean that distinctions between media users and producers completely disappear:

> Not all participants are created equal. Corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exert greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers. And some consumers have greater abilities to participate in this emerging culture than others (Jenkins 2006, p. 3)

However, Jenkins also argues that the third factor in the convergence culture, collective intelligence, can be seen as an alternative source of media power (Jenkins 2006, p. 4).

Jenkins' idea of convergence culture is related to other techno-optimists' ideas of the potential of networked media. Yochai Benkler is one scholar who has highlighted the positive potentials. Benkler analyses what he calls the 'networked information economy', which is displacing the industrial information economy of the last on and a half centuries. He argues that three aspects characterize this system of information production. First, information production gives higher priority to non-proprietary strategies than the production of tangible goods. Second, the networked information economy gives rise to a nonmarket production because individuals have increased access to each other on a global scale. Third, the combination of these two aspects leads to the emergence of large-scale peer production of knowledge and culture (Benkler 2006, pp. 4-5).

This has considerable importance for artists and the cultural industries because it challenges the distinction between users and producers, and between amateurs and professionals. These new developments have led to understandings of them as 'produsers' (contraction of 'producers' and 'users') or 'co-creators' (Bruns 2008; Poster 2001; Tapscott & Williams, 2008). These perceptions are central to the forms of media practices that Jenkins calls 'convergence culture' (Jenkins 2006), in that they put emphasis on users' role in disseminating and pursuing media content across media platforms, and is thereby also a driving force in what he labels 'transmedia storytelling' (Jenkins 2007). However, it has also been argued that user agency is more complex than these terms might suggest:

> User agency is cast by cultural theorists as participatory engagement, in contrast to the passive recipients of earlier stages of media culture. Economists and business managers phrase user agency in the rhetoric of production rather than consumption. And in terms of labour relations,

users are appraised in their new roles as amateurs and volunteers vis-á-vis those in the professional leagues. If we want to understand how socio-economic and technological transformations affect the current shake-up in power relationships between media companies, advertisers and users, it is important to develop a multifarious concept of user agency. (van Dijck 2009, p. 42)

Van Dijck calls persuasively for understanding user agency as a complex concept, and she emphasizes that we know little about the effect of new user practices in the new media landscape. Importantly, she argues that in a media landscape dominated by user-generated content "Cultural production can no longer be theorized exclusively in terms of industry or social stratification of consumers, as the amplified efficacy of media technologies is closely intertwined with the rise of global media constellations" (van Dijck 2009, p. 54).

Importantly, the architecture of the individual platform sets normative standards for e.g. the forms of interaction, styles of self-representation, and private/public balance (Manovich 2001; Papacharissi 2009). This has direct implications for the musicians studied in this dissertation because it shapes the expectations to the form and content of their communication.

However, there is also a growing recognition that the ubiquitousness of online social media, as well as the speed that it has spread with, has falsely led us to think that it represents radically new form of sociality. As danah boyd expresses it: "None of the capabilities enabled by social media are new […]. What is new is the way in which social media alters and amplifies social situations by offering technical features that people can use to engage in these well-established practices." (boyd 2014, pp. 12-13). The rest of the chapter develops this perspective, and explores how existing theories of social practices can be adapted to online communication.

Performance of Self

From an early stage, research in online media has focused on the way users strategically present themselves to each other. Sociologist Erwing Goffman's work on *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1959) has had significant impact on the understanding of the use of social media. Research on online social practices

have tried to adapt Goffman's ideas about the social rituals and impression management in face-to-face communication to the mediated social situations offered by social media (see e.g. Baym 2010; boyd 2014; Hearn 2008; Papacharissi 2011).

Central to Goffman's ideas is the assumption that individuals who engage in communicating with each other try to gain greater knowledge about the person they are communicating with.

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude towards them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. (Goffman 1959, p. 13)

This information is used to define the social situation, and thereby the social expectations and norms for communicating – what responses are expected from them, and what responses can they expect from others. For the purpose of gathering this information, we use both the expressions *given* and the expressions *given off* (Goffman 1959, p. 14). That is, we build our perception of others not only on grounds of the acts and signs usually perceived as communication in a narrow sense, such as words and gestures, but also a wide variety of actions and signs that we perceive as characteristic for that person and telling of the underlying intentions of the expressions used by the other part.

From the point of view of the person presenting him/herself often tries to control the signs given off. We may wish our communication partner to understand our message in a certain way, and therefore try to control the signs we give off in order to shape how we are perceived by others (Goffman 1959, p. 15).

By using this mutual assessment of expressions given and given off, conversation partners eventually create a 'situational modus vivendi' (Goffman 1959, p. 21) in which they share an overall definition of the social situation they contribute to. And this consensus is then used as a context for behaving and performing appropriately.

To explain the tactics of self-presentation, Goffman famously adopted ideas from dramaturgy through analogies to theatrical performance. This conceptual move helps develop a vocabulary for analyzing the importance of the *setting*, *appearance* and *manner* on the perception of what is communicated (Goffman 1959, p. 32ff).

Moreover, it helps explain the multiple and sometimes contradictory roles that individuals adopt in everyday life, particularly in its various front and backstage regions.

In music, and particularly popular music, self-presentation is part of the identity-making so fundamental to the culture, in recorded music, in performance, and in the surrounding narratives that shape collective experiences and meanings. In contrast to many other professions, popular musicians perform on a real stage; there is a theatrical dimension to music as a performative art. The stage performance is a musical performance *and* a performance of the artist's public self, his or her persona. Auslander has argued for a hierarchical relationship between these two levels of performance. According to him,

> "Musical performance may be defined, using Graver's terms, as a person's representation of *self within a discursive domain of music.* What musicians perform first and foremost is not music, but their own identities as musicians, their musical personae" (Auslander 2006, p. 102)[Italics in original]

This implies that both the musical work and the performance of this work "serve the musician's performance of a persona" (Auslander 2006, p. 102).

Unlike actors, musicians usually appear as themselves rather than professionals taking on a role. Therefore an analysis of musical performance should not as much be addressed with theories of acting (where there is a relatively clear distinction between the artist's identity and the role taken on), but rather be addressed with theories of interactions in everyday life.

This is not to say that the identity performed on stage by musicians is the same as in other aspects of their life. As Goffman points out, we routinely perform multiple versions of ourselves in different situations. The identity performed by musicians through music, can then in turn be labeled the *musical persona* (Auslander 2006, p. 104).

In the rest of this chapter, I adopt the term *musical persona* and extend from identity performed through music to include also the identity of musicians as professionals. The latter includes, among other things, cover art, videos, social media posts, and interviews. It could be argued that these aspects are covered by what Goffman labels

as 'setting', but I wish to explicitly include these in the analysis of the performance of musical persona. Both because these forms of expression are increasingly intertwined in today's converging media, but also because the structural dynamics of the music industries are increasingly putting musicians in control of these expressions, thereby connecting them even closer to the artistic identity performed by the artist.

Furthermore, these developments represent significant turns caused by changes in the media landscape: The increased complexity of communication in networked media, and the emergence of presentation of self as a distinct form of labor. I will now turn to the first of these changes.

Collapse of Contexts

As mentioned in the section above, Goffman's ideas have considerable relevancy in analyzing the social interaction between musicians and their audiences. However, this dissertation is concerned with changes in roles and social order, and Goffman explicitly ignores this (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 4). In an attempt to understand how media affect the social interactions described by Goffman, Joshua Meyrowitz tries to integrate Goffman's focus on face-to-face communication with McLuhan's focus on the effects of media in order to overcome the traditional divide between face-to-face behavior and mediated communication (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 4). In this section, I will develop Meyrowitz's ideas, drawing on the work of Baym & boyd (2012), Castells (2011), and Marwick & boyd (2010), in order to explain the complexities of communication in social media.

For Goffman, the social situation in which interaction took place was relatively well defined. Although individuals would change between different situations, the context would be unequivocal and therefore it would be relatively easy to reach a consensus on a situational modus vivendi between conversation partners. Meyrowitz's claim is that the spread of electronic media (primarily TV and radio) has led to a collapse of contexts, as it disrupted the delineation of distinct audiences to distinct situations. As Meyrowitz puts it:

> By bringing many different types of people to the same 'place', electronic
> media have fostered a blurring of many formerly distinct social roles.
> Electronic media affect us, then, not primarily through their content, but

by changing the 'situational geography' of social life (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 6).

The perhaps most important effect of this change in situational geography is that new media dissolve the connection between the social situation and the physical setting. The spread of electronic media has led to emergence of mediated social situations in what Meyrowitz calls *informational settings*, created by media (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 7). This implies that media are not simply channels conveying messages from one environment to another. Drawing on *medium theory* as developed by Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan, Meyrowitz conceives of media as environments and sensory filters with far-reaching implications for communication and social change (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 18).

Medium theory has, rightly, met some critique for its inability to account for how a technology that merely connects people can lead to changes in social behavior and structure of societies. For Meyrowitz, the changes in situational geographies brought by new media deliver exactly this analytical framework (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 23). Although these theories might, at first sight, seem to have little in common, they complement each other well:

> The medium theorists and the situationists implicitly deal with a similar theme: patterns of access to each other. The situationists suggest how our particular actions and words are shaped by our knowledge of who has access to them, and the medium theorists suggest that the new media change such patterns of access. (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 33)

The importance of these changes stems partly from the fact that electronic media disembed social situations from physical space, and make them contingent of information flows instead. This also means that the division between social situations becomes part of a continuum of settings rather than a dichotomy between onstage and backstage situations (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 36). This relies on two arguments:

> (1) behavior patterns divide into as many single definitions as there are distinct settings, and (2) when two or more settings merge, their distinct definitions merge into one new definition. (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 46)

Developing Goffman's theatre metaphor, Meyrowitz argues that what this merging of settings lead to the emergence of a new set of 'regions': the *deep back*, the *forefront*

and the *middle* region. The middle region being what arises when audience get a 'sidestage' view, which is not a part of the staged (frontstage) performance, but neither a private (backstage) setting, as actors are aware that audience members might be able to observe them.

How Media Change Social Roles

For Meyrowitz, this development has consequences that reach beyond the setting of the interaction between individuals. He argues that when the informational geography changes, it causes social roles to change too. He analyses how three overlapping categories of social roles are affected by the introduction of electronic media. The three categories are roles related to *group identity, socialization* and *hierarchy*.

The notion of group identity has traditionally been closely related to a certain place. Therefore, getting access to a group's territory was the primary way to become part of that group, but by eroding the link between physical location and social situation, electronic media change the nature of group identities by allowing outsiders access to a territory without being physically present (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 57). Within popular music cultures, these themes have been discussed primarily in relation to subcultures. On the one hand regarding the, often ambivalent, attitude to media coverage (Thornton 1995), but also in connection to the structure of musical subcultures. Generally musical subcultures have evolved from relatively tight-knit and heterogeneous groups in terms of place, gender and class, towards something closer to the evanescent neotribes described by Maffesoli (Maffesoli 1995).

A similar effect is present in relation to socialization. Meyrowitz argues that the introduction of new media

> [M]ay also affect the socialization process by affecting the extent to which many groups are able to control access to their backstage behaviors. The more a medium tends to allow for very private backstage areas, the more it will support slow, sequenced stages of socialization. The more a medium tends to reveal areas of group activity that might otherwise be private, the more it will undermine slow, staggered socialization processes (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 60)

As it was the case with group identity, socialization has traditionally been closely connected to access to the group's territory, and information and knowledge accumulated within the group. This, in turn, consolidates the connection between high status and inaccessibility. On one hand, inaccessibility has become a measure of status that comes to expression for example in the layout of offices, where high status roles can control their territory through closing their doors, whereas lower status roles are often seated in open offices. On the other hand the high status can only be maintained "by carefully controlling information, and by hiding the need for, and the techniques of, control" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 66).

In the case of digital media, these suggestions raise questions of how digital media in general (and social media at a more specific level) affect the social roles of professional musicians. The inner workings of the music industries have traditionally been extremely well guarded, as well as the arena for elaborate mythologies. Both the work life of popular musicians and the relationships between industry actors such as labels, artist management and radio have been opaque. Some emerging bands have problems separating myths from facts as they seek a career in the music industries (Cohen 1991; Zwaan & ter Bogt, 2009). Thus, the socialization into the role as professional musician has been closely related to personal relations to more experienced colleagues or industry professionals such as artist managers or record label A&Rs. The question that arises from the introduction of digital media is whether these new media reveal backstage areas of the music industries? On the one hand, established artists seem to agree to a larger degree of disclosure of their everyday life. Fans and colleagues get a glimpse of what happens behind the scenes in the everyday life of the artist. But on the other hand, this disclosure is often part of a strategic communication scheme designed to make the artist appear in a certain manner rather than a realistic representation of the everyday chores.

Collapse of Contexts in Digital Media

Meyrowitz's development of Goffman's social interactionism remains a compelling argument for the effects of media on social situations. But published in 1985, his focus is naturally on the 'new media' of that time – primarily television. I will now turn to the 'new media' of today – digital media – to explore how Meyrowitz's ideas can be applied in a contemporary context.

At least two aspects of digital media contribute to an increased complexity of the social situations of communication. First, the ability for practically everyone to have voice and spread media texts to an audience in a manner that resembles broadcast has led to a situation where the complexities Meyrowitz identified in relation to television no longer relate merely to a narrow elite with access to mainstream media, but apply to most individuals in western countries. Secondly, the integration of online and real life social networks leads to an increased complexity of the audience addressed. Instead of a relatively segmented audience of newspapers, radio and TV, updates on social media platforms address an eclectic mix audiences drawn from professional and personal, online and offline, networks. The radical collapse of contexts that ensue from these developments is central to understanding how and why social media change social and communicational practices.

With the emergence of the personal webpage, other people than privileged elites were suddenly offered a channel for potential mass communication. In this sense, social media merely represent an increased availability of media as a way to have a voice in public life.

> To the extent they could, people have always used media to create public identities for themselves, others, and groups. It is thus not the ability to use technology toward these objectives that is new with social media, but the scale at which people who never had access to broadcast media are now doing so on an everyday basis and the conscious strategic appropriation of media tools in this process. (Baym & boyd, 2012, p. 321)

Early on, the personal webpage became a platform for conscious self-representation (Papacharissi 2002). Even though the personal webpage presents the same issues of collapse of contexts as described by Meyrowitz, they still allowed for a high degree of control over the information disclosed, and thereby also limited the amount of expressions given off in the Goffmanian sense (2002). But where the personal homepage might have offered increased control through its absence of non-verbal communication, social media introduce a new kind of expressions given off as the audience is now offered access to other strands of communication intended for another audience that would previously have been separated to another social and physical setting.

Before the Internet became a mainstream communication platform, Livingstone argued that digital media led to a reformulation of how audiences are to be understood:

> Audiences – as users – are increasingly to be understood as plural (i.e. multiple, diverse, fragmented), as active (i.e. selective, self-directed, producers as well as consumers of texts), and as both embedded in and distanced from specific contexts of use. (Livingstone 1999, p. 64)

With the emergence of social media, these tendencies move from the periphery to a more mainstream position in the media landscape, and at the same time the "increased interactivity and bi-directionality of social media" blurs the boundaries between *audiences* and *publics* even more, and calls for rethinking the relationship between them (Baym & boyd, 2012, p. 322).

Every act of communication has an *imagined audience*. In face-to-face communication we often imagine the person in front of us as the only audience, forgetting that others might eavesdrop on the conversation. In social media the implications of this tendency are amplified. Most users understand that anyone might potentially see or hear what they post, but in practice we often temporarily forget this and act as if the audience is bounded (Litt 2012; Marwick & boyd, 2010).

Social media sites each have their own forms of feedback mechanisms (possibilities to comment, like, share, etc.), and often users will imagine their audience as "those utilizing the feedback mechanisms the most, such as those who comment frequently" (Litt 2012, p. 337)

But the conceptions of audiences also change in other ways. While audiences might often be less visible in social media, they might also be more visible. For musicians this is a significant dynamic. On the one hand musicians used to interact with their audience only in face-to-face manner at concerts, but, contrary to most citizens, they were also producers of media products that gave them a unidirectional public appearance through recorded music as well as broadcast and print media. Social media introduce an intermediary ground between these two modes of communication between artist and audience, and in some cases make the audience of the musician's mediated communication more visible than ever before (Baym & boyd, 2012).

One last aspect of collapsing contexts in social media is related to a blurring of roles. Both Goffman and Meyrowitz are primarily concerned with the ways in which the situational geography changes when distinction between audiences erode. One primary affordance of networked media is that they have lowered the cost of becoming a speaker, thereby also increasing the number of speakers (Benkler 2006).

This introduces problematics of distinguishing producers and audiences that are further complicated by the emergence of what Jenkins calls *convergence culture* (Jenkins 2006). In converging media, users increasingly act simultaneously as audiences, consumers, curators, commentators and producers. Rather than just acting as passive recipients of a message, users of social media engage in their own performance of self, often through acts of what Bolter and Grusin (Bolter & Grusin, 1999) call *remediation*. The effect of this is that one person's (the artist's) performance of self, through remediation, becomes an instrument for another person's performance of self.

The Branded Self

This section explores the performance of self in social media is increasingly enacted as a distinct form of labor, where individuals engage in strategic presentation of self particularly through online media. The development from the performance of self to branding represents a professional marketing discourse. In that sense, it reflects the commercial interests that have emerged as social media have become ubiquitous. But it also implicates a blurring of distinction between cultural meaning and capitalism in what has been called capitalism's cultural turn (Slater 2011; Thrift 2005).

Social media entail modes of interaction that is primarily centered around a specific conception of online sociality embodied in the acts of 'sharing', 'friending' and 'liking' that "establish a normative order for online socialization and communication" (van Dijck 2013, p. 65). There have been relatively few studies of how this 'normative order' affects the interactions between artists and fans. An important discussion has been on how to conceptualize the relationship between artists and fans in social media. One approach has been to acknowledge that the artist has become more accessible, but maintain that the relationship is parasocial in that the artist is only intermittently present, and that online social spaces' primary function is to facilitate fan-to-fan relationships (Beer 2008). Others have showed how social media can facilitate one-to-

one friendships between artists and fans (Baym 2011; Baym & Burnett, 2009). And others again, such as Marwick and boyd (Marwick & boyd, 2010) have argued that social media have disrupted the traditional expectation of parasociality as "the ability of famous people to read and reply to fans has given rise to new sets of practices and interactions", where there is a new expectation of intimacy, that demands personal involvement in building affective ties with their fans (Marwick & boyd, 2011, p. 156).

But in spite of changing norms and expectations, the artist/fan relationships is in many ways fundamentally different from friendships, and might, in fact, be "better understood as market relationships, given that artists are selling things audiences want" (Baym 2012, p. 289). This point would be in line with current the music industry discourse, which focuses on the artist brand as the main locus of value in the digital era (Leeds 2007; O'Reilly, Larsen, & Kubacki, 2013). From a strategic perspective, there is no doubt that social media is often viewed by artists and music executives as a valuable marketing platform. But this is not necessarily a tendency that crates tension or distance between artists and fans. In fact such practices could be argued to be customary among all types of users of social media. In social media, what Giddens called the 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens 1991) has become source of cultural and economic capital in the form of a 'branded self' (Hearn 2008) for individual as well as for commercial actors.

> Self-branding involves the self-conscious construction of a meta-narrative and meta-image of self through the use of cultural meanings and images drawn from the narrative and visual codes of the mainstream culture industries. The function of the branded self is purely rhetorical; its goal is to produce cultural value and, potentially, material profit. (Hearn 2008, p. 198)

The tendency to construct and communicate personal identity through products from the cultural industries is not new. Music and fashion has been central instruments for the construction of identity among youths since the middle of the 20th century, at the least (Hebdige 1981; Negus 1997a). Arguably the phenomenon can be seen as an extension of the distinction through taste (Bourdieu 1984) that dates a long time before the emergence of cultural industries.

Hearn's conception of the branded self differs from expression of identity through consumption of cultural products because the branded self appears is connected to

networked media, in which ordinary people's expressions of identity potentially reach a much wider audience. The consequence is that they are subject to complications arising from collapse of contexts that, as described earlier, was previously primarily an issue for the few members of an elite appearing in electronic media. Furthermore, Hearn's concept of the branded self as a distinct form of labor differs from the more segregated relation between cultural and economic capital offered by for example Bourdieu. For Hearn, the construction of a branded self is more rational and directed at generating specific effects:

> The branded self is one of the more cynical products of the era of the flexible personality: a form of self-presentation singularly focused on attracting attention and acquiring cultural and monetary value. The flexible, visible, culturally meaningful branded self trades on the very stuff of lived experience in the service of promotion and possible profit. (Hearn 2008, p. 213)

In order to fully understand the online relationships between artists and fans, it is therefore necessary to view them as both affective ties and market relations, even though this might intuitively seem paradoxical. What artists engaging with fans through social media create, is a professional persona that draws on the same forms of self-representation as the branded self. This persona is built through concrete labor, by establishing and maintaining affective ties with fans and followers.

In the music industry, the notion of a branded self is radicalized, as the branded self is not only a product of a distinct form of labor.

> Music companies directly capitalize on affects and desires, which form the thread that stitches the artist-brand to various products, musical and otherwise, through encircling recording contracts. The idea of the artist-brand has been rendered concrete and formalized through radical changes to the recording contract itself. (Meier 2013, p. 136)

There seems to be consensus among industry insiders that music companies are increasingly to generate profits through building 'artist brands' that can be capitalized across multiple revenue channels. These 'artist brands' can be seen as appropriations of the social practice of branded selves of consumers. But as opposed to these, artist brands are commonly formalized through contracts with record companies (Meier

2013). Although it seems that record companies have abandoned the full 360 deal, which entitles the record company to shares of all the artist's revenue streams, secondary revenue streams are becoming more and more important for music companies.

The industry practice of *multiple rights deals* will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. At this point I find it sufficient to point to the complex social practices, amplified by social media, in which users increasingly construct personal brands with the explicit purpose of attracting attention and accumulating economic value. Musicians are subject to the same social practices as ordinary users, but at the same time subject to contractual obligations aimed strategically at monetizing on the social relations with audiences.

To further complicate the matter, musicians are not only constructing their own branded self. They are simultaneously instrumental in other persons' presentation of self. The next section will elaborate on this.

The complexities of artist brands

The theories mentioned above build, to some extent, on Goffman's conceptions of the presentation of self (Goffman 1959), applying the term branding as a more cynical, strategic and directed form of self-presentation.

A brand can be seen as a form of immaterial capital. In that way it embodies "[…] the fusion of the attention and the production economy, of aesthetics and economics more generally, long underway in the transition away from Fordism" (Arvidsson 2006, p. 7). Where Fordist advertising sought to impose needs and tastes on consumers, branding offers cultural texts that can be appropriated by consumers in a process connected to what has been called *Informational Capitalism* (Arvidsson 2006; Dyer-Witheford 1999).

In informational capitalism "Brands aren't inert logos, they are the product of constantly evolving social relations" (Carah 2010). From a cultural point of view, brands build identity and value through being cultural resources that can be used as building blocks in the production of the self (Holt 2002). In the case of music, this must be taken as especially significant as music is one of a few stylistic symbols, which

are seen as closely related to the production and communication of identity, particularly among youths.

Fordism represented the birth of mass-consumption that followed from the rationalization of production, and which itself was made possible by the industrialization and division of labor typically associated with assembly line work. Post-Fordism opposes the rigid rationalization associated with Fordism. Instead it relies on increased flexibility of labor, products and consumption (Harvey 1990, p. 147). The consequence of this is that post-Fordist capital accumulation is centered on production of information, symbols and affects, and heavily reliant on ephemeral consumer fads, which is then again linked to a post-modern aesthetic that "celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodification of cultural forms" (Harvey 1990, p. 156).

On one hand, middle-layer artists potentially benefit from the post-Fordist preference for difference and individuality, which can be seen as an effort to distance oneself from the 'duped' mass-consumer. On the other hand, these artists rarely make music with accumulation of capital as the sole purpose. Rather, they are most often driven by artistic motives of a personal and moral character. One consequence of this is that, although the flexibility of post-Fordist production is well suited to describe music production at an overall industry level, the individual artist is much less likely to adapt to consumer trends. So while niche artists aesthetically try to distance themselves from the 'duped' mass-consumers, their own strategic interest is often, paradoxically, to try to convince consumers of the superiority of their own brand, rather than following market demands.

Artists as brands are therefore not only very potent symbols that can be employed in the 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens 1991). They are also at the same time individuals using social media for more mundane social practices, as well as for professional communication based on ethical codes related to their artistic production. As a consequence, the use of social media for artists is a complex balancing act.

The public image of an artist has traditionally been formed through representations in broadcast and print media, combined with face-to-face encounters at live concerts. With the exception of artists appealing to tabloid readers, this made it relatively easy to control the impressions given and given off, as public communication from the artist happened primarily in well-defined settings. Through interviews, advertising

and press releases, artists (and the surrounding industry professionals) could, to a larger extent, control the contextual backdrop for their music. Even though journalists and critics are free to present artists in any way they found appropriate, artists and their management can use access as a way of controlling what kind of image is conveyed by the journalists.

Social media introduce a much wider set of contexts for the presentation of the artist brand. Three aspects of this are significant: 1) A context collapse emerges between private and public communication, 2) the audience has increased expectations of continuous communication from artists, and 3) the artist brands can be affected by the contexts they are embedded in when used in audiences' self-presentation. In this section I will focus mainly on the last of these aspects.

Most users of social media are aware that other users create stylized representations of themselves. One way for teenagers to do this is through display of musical taste. This practice was especially prominent within the architecture offered by MySpace, where a personalized music player occupied a central place in the personal profiles. With the second generation of social media services like Facebook and Twitter, as well as more recent additions like Instagram, Pinterest and Snapchat, music no longer occupies a central place in the architecture of the sites, but the practice of displaying musical taste remains prominent through sharing music, often by embedding or linking to YouTube, Soundcloud or playlists on streaming services.

Research in mediated communication has often focused on the reduction of social cues. Building on the centrality of non-verbal cues in face-to-face communication, mediated communication was (and is) expected to be an impairment – especially for communication related to identity and feelings (Fulk & Collins-Jarvis, 2001). When the other part is not immediately visible we certainly lose a lot of cues regarding social rank, gender, race and appearance that help establish the social setting of face-to-face communication. But as online social interaction becomes ever more ubiquitous, social cues are gradually being reinstated in various forms – most notably with the inclusion of 'emoticons' in written communication, but also with an elaborate catalogue of acronyms (LOL, OMG, ROFL) and through deliberate misspellings and use of slang as ways of marking emotion and informal communication (Baym 2010).

In that sense, online communication is neither comparable to face-to-face interaction, nor traditional forms of written communication. Baym suggests that we should,

instead, "think of digital communication as a mixed modality that combines elements of communication practices in embodied conversation and in writing" (Baym 2010, p. 63).

On the one hand, digital communication shares a lot of properties with writing. Messages can be edited before transmission, they can be stored and retrieved, context must be embedded in the message, and the author and the reader are physically (and often also temporally) separated. On the other hand, the qualities of oral language is often foregrounded through the choice of wording and spelling mentioned above, but also through a practice of turn-taking and a notion of ephemerality of the conversation (Baym 2010). Furthermore, recent years have seen an increasingly audiovisual turn in social media with the rise of platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, Soundcloud to supplement the already popular YouTube. But also a shift towards prioritizing audiovisual content among more established platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

These aspects of digital communication have important effects on artists' abilities to control their appearance towards their audience. If digital communication was to be understood purely within the framework of written conversation, artists would have a large degree of control, but in a mixed modality, social practices are closer to those of embodied communication, and therefore also less controllable, as artists (as well as anyone else) are expected to take part in a more ephemeral and dialogic form of communication.

Another way in which digitalization in general, and media convergence in particular, has affected the communication of artists is through the advent of what Jenkins calls 'transmedia storytelling' (Jenkins 2003; 2006; 2007). According to Jenkins,

> Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes it own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (Jenkins 2007)

In this way, transmedia storytelling is not merely an adaption of content from one media to another. Each channel ideally functions as a unique entry point to the narrative universe, and each text is ideally accessible on its own terms, adding to the comprehension of the overall narrative. However the individual narrative parts are not

dependent on each other to be comprehensible, which allows users to engage more or less with the media texts according to their investment in the narrative without experiencing the narrative as redundant or obscure.

In order to function this way, transmedia stories are often not based on a specific plot, but rather "complex fictional worlds" which can contain multiple interrelated stories (Jenkins 2007).

In Jenkins' conception, transmedia storytelling relies on two emerging tendencies in the contemporary media landscape that are to some extent conflicting. On the one hand, it reflects the tendency towards conglomeration and vertical integration of media industry companies (Jenkins 2007; Scolari 2009). Transmedia storytelling makes it possible to exploit a strong cultural brand across media platforms and customer segments. On the other hand, it it relies heavily on the eroding barriers between media channels that is a result of media convergence. And one of the main drivers in *convergence culture* is the new, more active, role of the user in gathering, curating, remixing and disseminating media texts across different media platforms (Jenkins 2006). In that sense the concept of transmedia storytelling integrates commercial and artistic perspectives.

Musicians in New Media

As one of the earliest social media with mass appeal, MySpace had music as a core component in its architecture, and this arguably drew musicians and music fans to be early adopters of social media. Also in a scholarly context, the role of music, musicians and music fans in social media has attracted attention from an early stage, for example in the work of Nancy Baym, who has used the new relationship between musicians and their fans as a key case in her research on personal connections in digital media.

Baym has developed her scholarship on music from being first an exemplary case of online fan communities (Baym 2007), over analysis of fan labor in independent music (Baym & Burnett 2009), to a more specific analysis of how musicians perceive their interactions and relationships with their audiences (Baym 2012).

The latter approach is the most relevant to this dissertation. It focuses on how the boundaries between 'fans' and 'friends' become blurred, and how musicians employ different strategies to approach this tension. This approach relates Baym's research to

literature about celebrity in online media (Beer 2008; Marwick & boyd 2010; 2011). Baym argues that although relationships between artists and fans might present themselves initially as friendships, there are several way in which they differ from traditional conceptions of friendship. Most importantly, the artist/fan relationship is not voluntary or mutual to the extent that friendships are, as artists do not choose their fans. In fact, Baym argues that "Fan/artist relationships might seem to be better understood as market relationships, given that artists are selling things audiences want" (Baym 2012, p. 289).

However, in a relationship that builds on the notion of friendship – although not a friendship in the traditional sense – the expression of a market relationship becomes problematic. Baym suggests that public figures' mediated personae should be conceptualized as practices rather than constants (Baym 2012, p. 312). And these practices should not be considered pure strategies aimed at presenting a self that is perceived as authentic and thus can be commodified (Baym 2012; Marwick & boyd 2011).

The strategies employed by artists in negotiating the relationship with fans include managing the media they use as well as the topics they discuss (Baym 2012, p. 310).

Baym – like other pioneering social media scholars within the social sciences (e.g. Jenkins, Bruns, boyd) – has her primary focus on the role of the active *fans*, and how their ability to engage more actively in their fandom affects their relationship with artists. Taking this perspective might obscure how the evolving practices affect looser relationships between artists and fans, as well as other networking activities.

Musicians' professional use of social media also includes building networks of mutual support with local musicians and friends, distant friends and translocal niche groups (Sargent 2009). In this sense, local-level musicians use social media as one tool among others to extend the reach of their professional network.

> Without connections to record labels and other more formal music industry institutions, local-level musicians encounter significant limits in trying reach broader audiences. A number of commercial services have arisen to address and capitalize on local-level musicians' desires to overcome these limits. It is in the dynamic between commercial services and emerging instrumental relationships among informal musician

organizations that the music-post industry is beginning to take shape (Sargent 2009, p. 484).

A similar approach has been taken by Ole Mjøs (Mjøs 2012), who focuses on the role of social media (particularly MySpace) in advancing the global mobility of indie musicians from the Norwegian town of Bergen. Mjøs further argues that the space created for musicians in social media exists in tension with the attempts of international media corporations to exploit online platforms commercially.

The aspect of increasing commercialization of online media is important because it points to a connection between the themes in the three chapters of this part of the dissertation. The cultural significance of networked media affects not only the communication practices of music professionals. It also indirectly influences the organization of music industries because of its economic and cultural significance. And because the doubleness of online communication as a cultural encounter and as a market transaction adds yet another aspect to the grey area popular musicians have long been navigating between art and commerce. This points to some of the developments that will be analyzed in the next chapter.

In extension of that, this chapter has not only been about how communication is affected in digital media, but also about how these media are affecting the social possibilities and expectations towards musicians, and how the performance of self emerges as a distinct form of labor that is an integral part of the professional practice of musicians as well as most other users of digital media. The next chapter moves on to focus on how these developments affect the organization of the music industries.

Part Two: Analyses

6

The Digital (R)evolution: Organizational Changes in the Music Industries

This chapter analyzes how the emergence of digital media since the turn of the millennium has affected the economy and organization of the music industries. The chapter focuses on the economic conditions, power relations and professional roles of musicians. It is argued that although digitalization has led to significant changes, these changes take the form of an evolution of existing structures rather than a disruptive 'digital revolution'.

The chapter first analyzes how the flow of revenue sources has changed on an industry level, as well as how the increased accessibility of music production and distribution has affected power relations between musicians and music companies. It then analyzes how these changes have affected the conditions for musicians in terms of business models, investment, and development of talent.

The chapter uses data from trade organizations and collecting societies to analyze the changing economic conditions across the music industries. The chapter is also based on reports on industry revenue since 2000. The data serve to investigate claims about changing revenue streams.

In addition to these key figures, I draw on data from in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews and short informal interviews with professional musicians, representatives from record companies, live venues, collecting societies, streaming services, and musicians' unions. These interviews were conducted primarily with Danish industry professionals in Copenhagen between 2012 and 2015, but they also include interviews with industry professionals in Boston, conducted between May and August 2014.

Initially, digitalization has primarily had consequences for the market for recorded music. It is, however, one of the main points of this chapter that changes within the recording industry has had indirect consequences for the organization of other parts of the music industries. These conditions are reflected in this chapter by focusing primarily on developments in the recording industry, and continuously relating the findings to developments within other music industries. To differentiate between different music industries, I use the term 'the music business' as a collective name that broadly references developments across the different music industries. When I analyze individual music industries (e.g. the live industry, the recording industry, the publishing industry), I distinguish explicitly between them.

Since the turn of the millennium it has been a widespread perception that the music business has gone through significant changes. Digital production and distribution of music has led to a change in the power relations between record companies, brick-and-mortar music retail, music critics, and mass media. The *filter flow* model (Hirsch 1972), where *gatekeepers* control as sequence of selection processes that determines which products eventually become available to consumers, is short-circuited by the possibilities offered by cheap technology and widespread access to networked digital media. A great deal of the existing research has therefore focused on the impact of digitalization on the conditions for production and distribution of music. The understandings of these changes follow two principal lines.

However the perception of crisis in the music industries are based on data from industry organizations with particular political agendas. It is therefore relevant to scrutinize common sense narratives before analyzing them in the light of empirical data from Denmark and USA. These narratives often take the form of two prominent discourses about the impact of digitalization on the music economy.

The first discourse has also been the one that has gotten most prominent media coverage, and it has therefore been important in shaping public and political opinion about the topic. This line has been preoccupied with the economic consequences of digitalization for the market for recorded music. In the years following the emergence of Napster and other illegal file sharing services, the record companies' industry association IFPI showed a steady decline in revenue. A great deal of attention was therefore given to the economic and social consequences of the emergence of illegal file sharing (Cluley 2013; Gieseler 2006; Mcleod 2005; Woodworth 2004). Most research has focused on negative consequences, but a few researchers have questioned

the rhetorics of crisis employed by the recording industry (Condry 2004; Oberholzer-Gee & Strumpf, 2007).

The second discourse has been put forward primarily by people with connection to the tech industry and representatives of the generation of so-called 'digital natives'. This line has put particular emphasis on the potential for democratization of music production and distribution offered by digitalization. This line found an influential argument in Chris Anderson's development of the idea of 'the long tail' (Anderson 2006). Anderson claimed that digital distribution significantly lowered the costs of distribution and sales of music (and other media products), thereby making it profitable to make a wider variety of products available to consumers. His argument was that when consumers were no longer restricted by the limited supply of physical records, niche music would account for a larger share of the total industry revenue. For some, this was seen as the end of the dominance of the shallow mainstream pop. In the age of 'infinite shelve space' the niches would free themselves of the shackles of commercialism, and the result would be availability of more music meeting the specific taste of each individual listener. However, Anderson's argument was not that this shift would lead to a substantial economy for niche artists, but rather that the aggregated importance of niche products would increase, leading to profit for the aggregators, but not the creators. Recent research has also showed that the digital music economy is arguably increasingly an economy where few artists take home almost all the profit (Elberse 2013).

Understanding Economic Consequences of Digitalization

The perspectives outlined above both highlight how digitalization has revolutionized the market for recorded music. But as argued in chapter 2, one should be careful not to equate the recording industry with the music business as a whole (Sterne 2014).

From this perspective, it is appropriate to take a closer look at the economic development across the different music industries. This is however complicated by insufficient and incompatible ways of reporting revenue across industries as well as across national borders. It is therefore not possible to get a valid and reliable overview of the overall economic development in the music business. Within the core areas of sales of recorded music and management of performing rights, there are, however,

central actors collecting data, which can give an indication of the development since 2000.

As mentioned, the recording industry trade organization IFPI has had an active role in shaping the public perception of the music business economy. In their attempt to draw attention to their challenges with piracy, IFPI have contributed to the picture of a music business in crisis through their information campaigns and political lobbying. In USA, record industry revenue fell 53% from 14.32 billion USD in 2000 to 6.78 billion USD in 2014 (Tschmuck 2015)
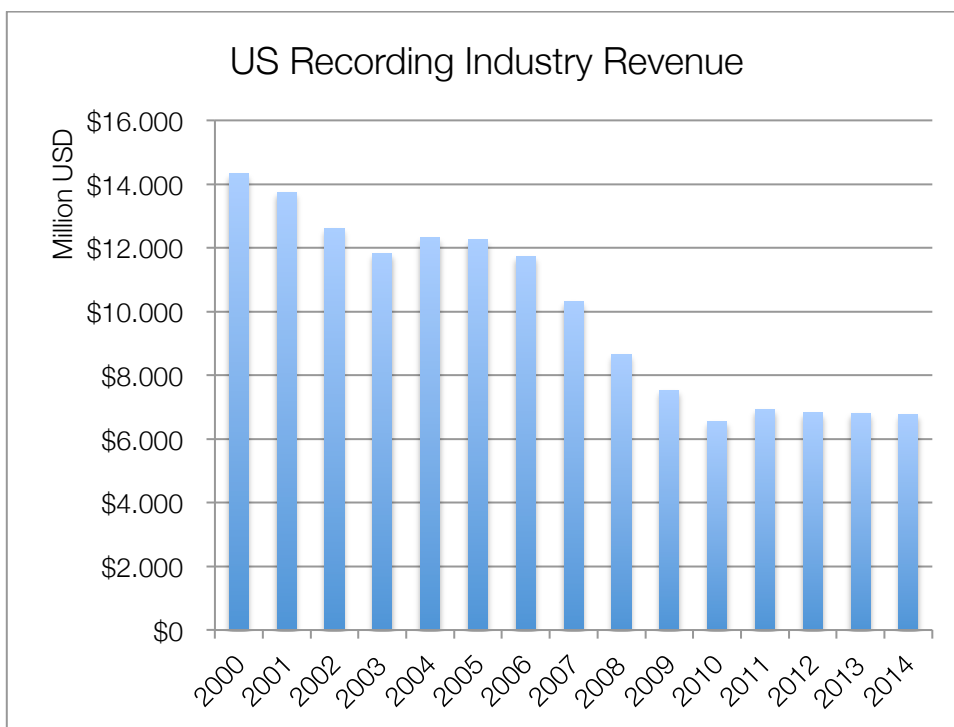

Figure 3: RIAA Year-end Industry Shipment and Revenue (RIAA 2000-2014, from Tschmuck 2015)

According to IFPI, Danish record companies have experienced a similar tendency with a 62% decline in revenue from 1.152 billion DKK in 2000 to 437 million DKK in 2014. But saying, on this basis, that the music business as a whole is in crisis would be

jumping to conclusions. During the same period, Koda that administers Danish composers' and songwriters' rights have experienced a trebling of their revenue from 241 million DKK in 2000 to 826 million DKK in 2014.

This increase in revenue from rights to public performance is primarily based on collections from a growing number of TV and radio channels, film via the Internet, digital TV services, and on-demand music streaming services. This positive development is thus a consequence of digitalization often overlooked.
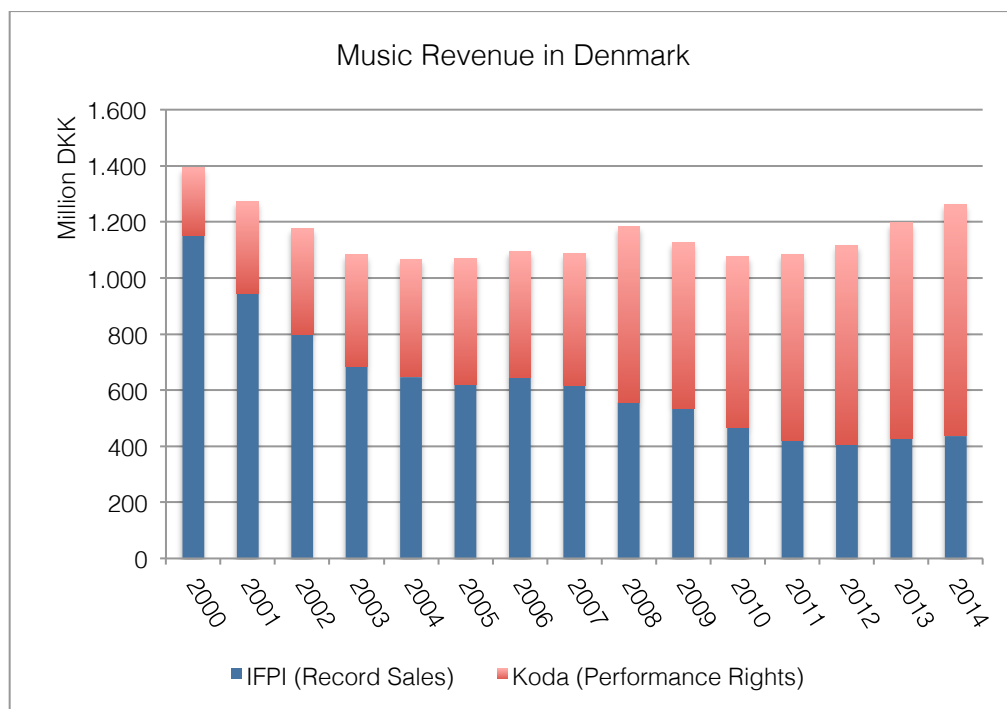
Figure 4: Revenue from sales of recorded music and performance rights in Denmark 2000-2014. Source: (IFPI 2015b; IFPI 2009; 2014b), Koda (data collected for this dissertation)

In a Danish context, the growth in rights based revenue for Koda almost compensates the decline in revenue from sales of recorded music reported by IFPI. Adding the annual revenue from the two organizations paints a picture of relatively stable overall revenue for the period since 2000 (see figure 4). Similar tendencies have been shown

in Sweden (Johansson & Larsson 2009) and United Kingdom (Rogers 2013). Analyses furthermore point to a growing economy in the international live music industry (Holt 2010). The live market is however complex, and there is no reliable aggregate numbers on overall revenue for the Danish live industry. But the industry association for the majority of Danish venues and festivals, Dansk Live, estimate that this tendency also applies to the Danish market (Personal interview with head of Dansk Live, Jakob Brixvold, 26. February 2014).

It is important to note that the legal and organizational framework around performance rights is radically different from country to country, and particularly between European countries and the US. It is therefore difficult to make direct comparisons, but it should be noted that the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), in their 2015 global collections report (CISAC 2015), showed only a small growth in revenue between 2010 and 2014, and the European countries accounted for most of this revenue (61% of global revenue in 2013). The economic significance of performance rights is therefore arguably less in the US. However, British industry analyst Mark Mulligan still estimates that global music revenues have been steady between 2000 and 2013, but that this covers a firm shift of balance. In 2000 recorded music accounted for 60% of total global music industry revenue, but in 2013 this had fallen to 36%, primarily due to massive growth (60%) in the live industry (Mulligan 2015, p. 299).

These tendencies call for a nuancing of the common sense understanding of an economic crisis in the music business as a whole. The economic crisis is primarily related to the market for recorded music and in this market the adaption of new digital business models gives reason to a dawning optimism. In Denmark, IFPI reported a growth of 5.2% in 2013, the year after the launch of Spotify, compared to the previous year (from 408 to 429 million DKK) (IFPI 2014b). The most recent numbers furthermore show that streaming accounted for 58.5% of total revenue from sales in Denmark in 2014 (IFPI 2015b). Globally, music streaming has yet to show as significant success as in Scandinavia and accounted only for 14.7% of total revenue from recorded music in 2014 (IFPI 2015a). But it is also a market in rapid transformation; subscription dervices saw a 39.0% growth globally from 2013 to 2014 (IFPI 2015a).

Across the music industries there has, in other words, been a growing economy through a decade with a global economic recession. This does not mean that

digitalization has been without influence on the music business. But the impact is primarily related to significant changes in the revenue streams, and therefore also potentially changed power relations between different music industries.

One interesting aspect of these changes in revenue streams is that they, viewed separately, on average should be to the advantage of artists as their share of revenue is often higher from rights exploitation and live performances than from sales of recorded music.

How Democratization Affects Musicians

In spite of these seemingly positive reports about economic growth on an overall industry level, artists still regularly report that their income has been dwindling since the advent of digital distribution (see e.g. Arthur 2013; Byrne 2015; Dresling & Kjær 2015). At first sight this might seem contradictory. How can the music business report growth while artists experience that it is becoming harder and harder to make a living from their music? Based on the tarnished reputation of particularly record companies, it could seem natural to assume that artists are tricked out of some of their income in the complex royalty models between e.g. record companies and streaming services. Another explanation could be that some of these artists are simply not as popular as they used to be. I will, however, suggest that the main reason is to be found in the so-called 'democratizing' forces of digitalization.

Technological developments have had significant effects on the conditions for creating and distributing music. In a music business context, this has often been addressed in relation to illegal file sharing (Gieseler 2006; Whelan 2006; Woodworth 2004), but this development has had far more encompassing consequences than the erosion of a business model for recorded music. New technologies not only enables practically free, global distribution of music, but have also made it possible to record music in professional sound quality without access to expensive studio facilities. The effects of these developments have been called a democratization of culture (Benkler 2006) because it grants much more people access to public space, which form the basis of an increase of non-proprietary peer production of particularly knowledge and culture.

I draw on Yochai Benkler's conceptualization of democratization (Benkler 2006; 2011) in part because the term has become significant in music business discourse in recent

years, and therefore offers an opportunity to relate the academic debate to contemporary professional debates.

Benkler highlights democratization as the positive side – the hopes – relating to the polity, cultural production, and economic opportunity in what he calls the networked society or the networked economy, which he defines as:

> "[…] an understanding of a particular historical moment when computer-mediated networks of information and communications have come (a) to play a particularly large role, and (b) to realign in fairly substantial ways the organization of production, power, and meaning making in contemporary society, relative to how similar aspects of social life were organized in the preceding century or earlier" (Benkler 2011, p. 723)

In his understanding of democratization, Benkler stresses that "democratization needs to be detailed in terms of who has the *freedom to do what*, and who has the *power to do what* within the system or set of systems claimed to be democratized by a given change or attribute of interest, relative to previous circumstances." (Benkler 2011, p. 723)[Italics by this author].

This has had direct consequences for the work conditions for professional musicians because it has increased the quantity of available music dramatically. Over the ten-year period from 2004 to 2013, the annual number of new releases in Denmark doubled (Gramex 2014). Though I haven't been able to find statistics on releases on the American market, it would be fair to expect that a similar tendency applies here. In terms of increased competition, Elberse notes a similar tendency in the sales of digital tracks in USA: "as the market for digital tracks grows, the share of titles that sell far too few copies to be lucrative is growing as well. More and more tracks sell next to nothing" (Elberse 2013, p. 160).

Democratization has thereby dramatically increased the competition internally among musicians. This is probably the most important reason for the incongruence between how the development affects economy on an overall industry level and on the level of the individual artists. Even though the economy of the music business as a whole is growing, the effect is diluted by the increasing number of artists that take a share of the market, leaving less money on average for each artist.

From this perspective, the democratization of production and distribution presents a dilemma for professional musicians. The increased quantity of available music is a direct consequence of the increased accessibility of technology – not only because of lower prices, but also because of its user-friendliness. One notable positive aspect of this is that a greater diversity of music is available to listeners. From a cultural and democratic perspective, this is positive. This development has, however, also been seen as an opportunity to build a profitable market for niche music in 'the long tail' (Anderson 2006). This has arguably been succeeded at an industry level, where particularly larger companies can draw on a multitude of small revenue streams from a large back catalogue of music. But for the vast majority of individual artists that are part of this niche market, the income generated here is not substantial.

The introduction of digital distribution has significant effects on the financial flow within recorded music. The supply of music is much larger and more diverse, and at the same time royalty payments are calculated and paid according to new principles. The so-called 'un-bundling' (Elberse 2010) has been one of the most important changes in this aspect. In the traditional album dominated market for CDs of the 1990's, consumers often bought songs that didn't immediately interest them, because they were part of an album. In industry lingo, such songs were sometimes called 'fillers' because their primary function was to fill up the album in order to optimize the profit from the album's hits that fans demanded. With digital distribution it became possible to buy individual songs and combine them to personal playlists with one's favorite tracks, without being 'forced' to buy the less interesting tracks. Overall, this led to a decline in revenue for digital tracks compared to CDs (Elberse 2010), but it also fragmented the individual listener's listening patterns because their listening was spread across far more artists, and with fewer tracks from each of them.

An interesting countermovement to this tendency has been the growing sales of vinyl LP's. In 2008, vinyls accounted for 0.3% of revenue from recorded music in Denmark. In 2014, vinyl's market share had increased to 1.7% (IFPI 2015b). Although this is the manifestation of a significant cultural phenomenon, which implies that some music fans still value the album format, the general economic significance of this tendency is modest. However, this tendency might be of relative significance for some middle-layer rock musicians, as they tend to cater to an audience segment that overlaps with the typical vinyl fans.

One of the consequences of these developments is that the digital music market can be understood as a 'blockbuster' or 'superstar' economy (Elberse 2013; Mulligan 2014) where a small fraction of the artists account for a majority of the earnings. My analysis of data from the Danish users of the streaming service WiMP (now Tidal) in August 2013 showed that top 1% of the artists accounted for 70% of all streams. The curve quickly flattens out, and the 95% that were listened to least only accounted for 10% of all streams (Pedersen 2014). It should be added that this analysis did not include the majority of artists that were available but didn't get streamed during that month. If these artists had been included, the distribution would have been even more top-heavy.

It is, however, important to note that the quantity of available music is much higher on streaming services than in brick-and-mortar retail of physical formats. Streaming services like Spotify offer more than 30 million different tracks[2]. For the sake of comparison, the largest Danish retailer of CDs has an active catalogue of 20,000 titles[3] (mainly albums). Most of these titles are not kept in stock in the individual store, but can be ordered. A large majority of the music that is available on streaming services would therefore not be available in a non-digital market. The simple reason for this is that the demand is so low that it would not be profitable to stock it.

If we focus on solely on artists that, using a very rough estimate, would also be available in brick-and-mortar record stores (5,000 artists), the top 1% (50 artists) accounted for 28,2% of all streams on WiMP in Denmark in August 2013 (Pedersen 2014). This might seem like a strong dominance, but for comparison the 50 best selling albums accounted for 46,3% of CD sales the same year (IFPI 2014b).

In Denmark we have seen a similar tendency for the performance rights area. During the period between 2003 and 2013, Koda's payment to their members grew by 70% from 138 million DKK to 234 million DKK. But during the same period, the number of recipients of these payments grew by 44% from 11,327 to 16,324 rights owners (numbers collected from Koda for this dissertation). Unlike most other institutions in the music industries, Koda also supplies data on the distribution of payouts between different segments of rights owners. If we analyze these data, it becomes clear that the growth primarily benefits the artists that already earn the most. In 2013, the 268 of Koda's members who received more than 150,000 DKK (1,6% of the members that

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[2] https://press.spotify.com/us/information/ [accessed 3. July 2015]
[3] http://www.fona.dk/musik-film-spil/musik [accessed 3. July 2015]

received payments that year) thus accounted for 55% of the aggregate payment (see figure 5).
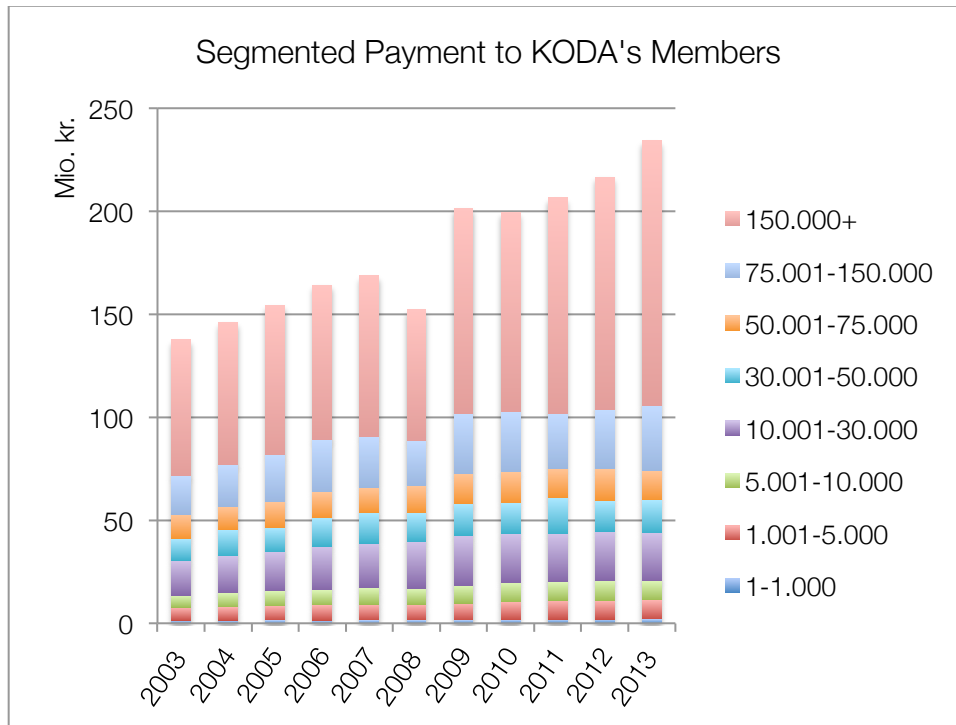
Figure 5: Payment to Koda's members segmented according to amount paid 2003-2013 (Koda, collected for this project)

The tendencies outlined above can be understood as an indication that the democratizing effects of digitalization causes an increased availability of music from far more musicians – both performing and composing artists. It gives more musicians the chance to realize their creative ideas, and make them publicly available. This, in turn, increases the cultural diversity available to listeners. The effect of democratization however has a limited effect on the economic parameters. This is in part because listerners take advantage of the diversity and availability of music in the streaming model. According to statistics from IFPI, Danish streaming listeners stream approximately 750,000 unique tracks every day (IFPI 2015b). The consequence of these developments is that it makes sense to talk about a real artistic and cultural

democratization, but this development simultaneously creates conditions for an increasing economic polarization between artists.

It is not necessarily a new tendency that it is difficult to make money from niche music. In 2005 – the year when iTunes launched in Denmark and kickstarted the market for digital downloads – a working group under the Danish Ministry of Culture estimated that "a large share of the releases that make it to top 100 actually don't break even" (Kulturministeriet 2005)[translated from Danish by this author]. As revenue from sales of recorded music has dwindled since the turn of the millennium, the cost of production has simultaneously gone down. This means that it takes less revenue to break even. Even though musicians in some cases make money even if a release doesn't break even – it depends on the type of deal signed with the label – this has direct influence on the label's willingness to invest in a release, including their inclination to pay advances to the musicians.

It has not necessarily become neither harder nor easier to make the economy related to a release come together. The primary effect of digitalization on the economy of record production is related to the potential profit from hit records. The economy of record production has traditionally been built on a model where the success of a few releases compensated for the fact that most releases didn't break even (Frith 1981; Miège 1989; Toynbee 2000) . The effect of digitalization has thus not primarily been in limiting the possibility of making a profit from the individual release, but rather to limited the potential profit from the hits. This has affected record companies' willingness to take risks in connection to new releases.

How Digitalization Changes Talent Development and Investment

As argued above, democratization of production and distribution of music has had two significant effects: Competition between musicians has increased dramatically, and sales of recorded music has lost its position as uncontested centre of rotation of the economy of the music business, as it has been the case during most of the 20th century (Wikström 2013, p. 143). Both of these tendencies have consequences for the character of the contracts between musicians and record companies.

In response to the recession in the 2000's, and as a consequence of the shift in revenue streams outlined earlier, a new type of multiple rights deals (often referred to

as '360 deals') has gained ground. This type of contracts secures record companies a share of revenue sources that are not related to recorded music, and would therefore traditionally have been outside their business area. These sources include publishing, live concerts, merchandise, and sponsorships and commercial partnerships. This marks a significant shift from previous practices. Since the 1970's there has been a relatively sharp division of labor between record companies and other actors. Record companies handled development and marketing of new talent, and other industries built ancillary businesses. And although some labels have at times insisted on also administering publishing rights, touring was typically perceived as valuable marketing for a new release, so artists sometimes received financial support from their record label for this, while the live industry still provided a business foundation for venues and promoters. In a music economy where a large share of industry earnings came from recorded music, this division of tasks made good sense, but with the digital shift outlined above, earnings from recorded music has been marginalized compared to other revenue sources. The adoption of multiple rights contracts has therefore been a way for the record companies to get access to more lucrative revenue streams, and thereby recoup their investments in talent development, production, marketing and promotion, and can therefore be understood as an attempt to provide security for the company's general investment in an artist (Stahl & Meier 2012).

However, this also entails that the boundaries between music industries have become more blurred. As record companies have started attending to functions previously undertaken by publishers, booking agencies and managers, companies that have previously had these areas as their specialty have experimented with the role as record label. A prominent international example of this has been the concert promoter Live Nation, which has signed 360, deals with superstars like Madonna and Jay-Z (Stahl & Meier 2012). In a Danish context, representatives from the music industry as well as musicians' unions told me that multiple rights contracts typically don't cover all rights areas, but the differences in business models is significant, and shows, for example, by distribution companies (that used to primarily service other record labels) have expanded their field of work to also acting as a record label. Oppositely, the Danish record label Copenhagen Records have for example established their own booking agency Copenhagen Music. Similarly, several companies have established international units dedicated to working with new business areas like commercial partnerships and synchronization, and other alternative way of exploiting rights.

The effect of this development has been a differentiation of business models where different actors offer their own idiosyncratic balance between contractual advantages and obligations.

This development places artists in a dilemma: on the one hand, democratization has given them opportunities for increased artistic autonomy by enabling artists produce and distribute their music without established companies. This has strengthened the artists' negotiating position. The differentiation of business models among different companies potentially makes it possible for artists to choose to sign a contract with the company that offers her the ideal balance between investment, artistic control, and share of revenue. At one end of the scale, the artists can choose to release her music through a label that only manages producing and distributing the music. In this case, the artist invests her own time and money in recording and marketing the music, and in return she gets a greater share of the revenue. At the other end of the scale, it is possible to sign a deal with a (often larger) record label where the label invests more time and money in the artist and the process. In return, the label then takes a larger share of a potential profit. Even within individual companies there is significant diversity in the type of contracts offered for different artists. In this light, the development can be seen as a strengthening of the artist's power relation to the label because it leaves greater room for negotiation of specific terms than the more standardized practice that was predominant previously.

On the other hand, it is important to remember that the main reason for implementing these changes has been the attempt to shift economic risk from companies to artists (Stahl & Meier 2012). This has primarily happened by reducing the companies' expenses for talent development. Responsibility for recording of the music has gradually been shifted to artists. This is possible because new technology has made it easier and cheaper to record music, which means that musicians are less dependent on record companies' investment in expensive studio time. Instead, artists increasingly present more or less finished recordings to record label A&Rs who, on that basis, then make decisions about offering a contract. In combination with, for example, research about the artist's ability to build a fan base through social media and live concerts, the company thus eliminates some of the uncertainty that was previously connected to signing a promising demo artist without knowing of she was able to deliver a finished recording of high quality.

Notably, there has also been a shift in the approach of to 360 deals within the decade that has passed since their emergence in the mid 2000's. According to the contract advisor for the Danish musicians' union Mikael Højris, who is probably the person who sees most contracts in Denmark, the companies tend to invest less in the artist than they did just five years ago:

> Since the advent of streaming, there has been a significant change, and that significant change has been, first of all, that almost all record companies used to talk about 360 degree contracts as something where they invested in all parts of the artist's career. So they invested money in concert production, they invested money in video production, they invested money all kinds of places to maximize profit for the artist and thereby also for themselves. That rhetoric has changed to the record companies wanting a 360 degree contract in order to get a share of everything (Mikael Højris, Personal interview, 21. October 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

What Højris argues is that instead of actively controlling and investing in ancillary business areas, the record companies now just want a cut of whatever the artist is able to earn on these areas, but without the active investment of money or effort. This is effectively a way for record companies to reduce their investment, while still receiving the same share of revenue.

Parallel to this, record companies have started exploiting the opportunities in digital distribution to test new artists on the market before committing to larger investments. This is done through the use of so-called option contracts. Option contracts are a way for record companies to avoid committing to an unprofitable artist while still securing the opportunity to capitalize as much as possible on a success. The way the company does this is by only committing to releasing a limited number of releases, while retaining an option to expand the contract to more releases if they see a commercial potential or experience commercial success (Passman 2011, p. 111). Option contracts are not in themselves a new phenomenon, but the way record companies use them is changing. With the advent of digital distribution and the accompanying unbundling (Elberse 2010) of music it has become possible to use digital singles or EPs as a form of market research and subsequently decide whether to take advantage of the option to release a full album. The combined effect of option contracts and unbundling has been that record labels reduce risk by committing less to investment in the artist. In this

sense, record companies utilize the same dynamics that cause financial upheaval to reduce the negative effects of that upheaval. But this happens at the expense of artists who end up carrying more of the risk if their music proves unsuccessful.

Internally within the record labels, organizational changes have also had indirect consequences for talent development. The number of employees has been reduced significantly and one of the areas that have been hit by this has been development of new A&R persons. An A&R (abbreviation for 'artist and repertoire') is responsible for functions related to selection and development of the artists that the company works with. In this area, some companies have lacked the economic latitude to let unproven capacities build experience, which has led to a potential lack of new A&R talent. The consequence of this is that there potentially aren't adequate artistic competencies available at label to guide new talent.

In light of this development, as well as the shift in revenue streams towards publishing and live, it could be plausible that the job of developing and promoting new talent to a larger extent is performed within these industries. But in practice this has almost solely happened in the form of publishers working with songwriters at for instance songwriter camps, and with some venues' work with emerging artists from their local scenes. The former is, however, not related to promoting artists to audiences, and the latter does not constitute a coherent development for the individual artists. On the whole, there are hardly any examples of artists that have emerged on the Danish market without collaborating with established record labels in some way.

Understanding the Danish Market in an International Perspective

With digitalization has also come an erosion of national and regional barriers, and music media are increasingly global. The Danish music market has traditionally been delimited by both organizational, cultural, and language factors. This has significant effects on the conditions for Danish artists. They have a unique starting point for building on national traditions, cultural references and pre-understandings – particularly by the specific references and connotations that come with the Danish language – which give good preconditions for creating a broad popular interest. At the same time the retail network in Denmark has been nationally oriented, which has given Danish artists good opportunities for securing prominent shelve space for their CDs in retail. From a common sense perspective one might therefore expect that local

Danish music would be challenged by digitalization and the movement towards a global media landscape. However, the Danish repertoire has not been as hard hit by the recession in sales of recorded music. The international repertoire has suffered most from the downturn on the Danish market (see figure 6)
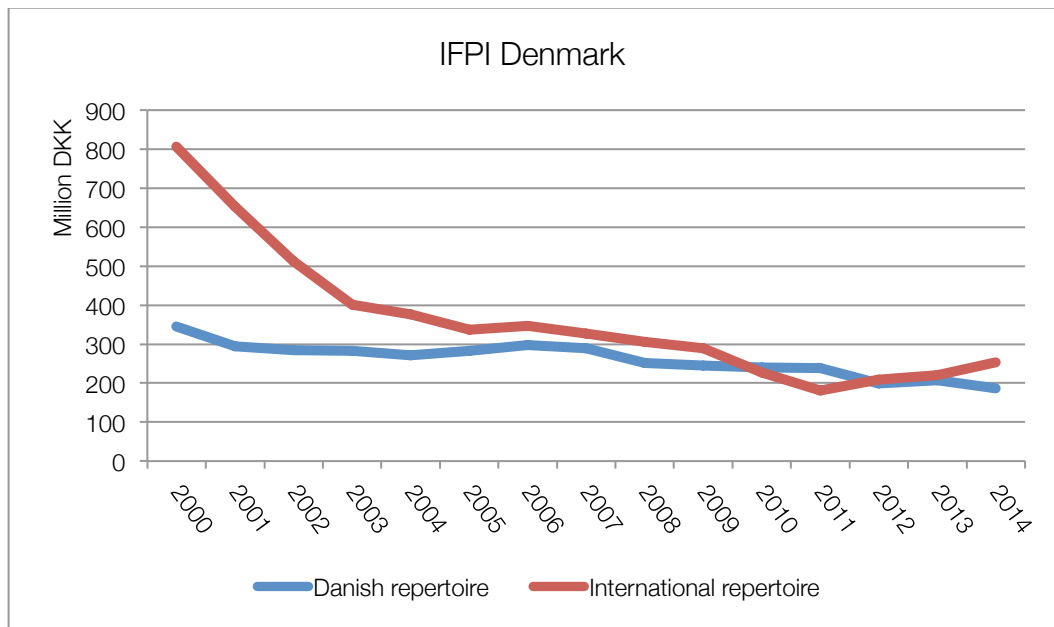
Figure 6: Turnover from recorded music in Denmark from IFPI's members, separated between Danish and international artists (IFPI 2009; 2014b)

There is no unequivocal explanation to this development. On the one hand, there are cultural reasons for the shift: the first years after the turn of the millennium there was a prominent wave of national stars singing in Danish[4]. On the other hand, there are also structural explanations: In late 1990's there were two dominant ways of breaking a new release on the Danish market; either by having massive airplay on radio, or by running a TV advertising campaign, which was primarily used for artists that where international superstars and therefore an international priority for the major labels. With the downturn, the latter was no longer a profitable solution, and radio practically became the only way to 'break' a new release. With the centrality of the national

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[4] E.g. Rasmus Seebach, Medina, Nik & Jay and Nephew.

Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) this was a relative advantage for Danish artists, as the public service contract that governs the policy of DR requires them to "[…] offer a high share of Danish music of minimum 30% on average across all music based radio channels" (Kulturministeriet 2013)[translated from Danish by this author]. In 2013, DR had a listener share of 76,6% of all Danish radio listeners (Thunø 2014), and since radio is still the primary source of music discovery this means that Danish artists have enjoyed a privileged position compared with international artists, which can have contributed to minimizing the impact of falling revenue on the Danish repertoire.

It is, however, important to note that the importance of (national) radio as the primary source of music discovery, though still dominant, is gradually being replaced by (international) digital platforms. Notably, the international repertoire's market share and total value has been rising since Spotify launched in Denmark in late 2011, whereas Danish repertoire has actually continue its decline (see figure 6). Similar tendencies have been documented in Norway (Nordgård et al. 2013), and it is plausible that Danish artists' share of revenue from recorded music will continue to decline as music streaming replaces sales of CDs and digital downloads.

To sum up, digitalization increases international competition, while also improving the opportunities for Danish artists to cultivate international markets. Two aspects in particular improve the chances for an international career for Danish artists: First, digital distribution makes it practically frictionless to make ones music available on a global market. Secondly, new contract practices where artists pay for their own recordings have the side-effect that many artists now own master rights to their recordings, which makes it possible for them to sign deals directly with international business partners without involving their Danish label.

Physical markets are very territorial, and access to the shelves of a brick-and-mortar store is contingent of a minimum of profitability. If a CD is not expected to be able to recoup the 'rent' of the shelve space, the storeowner will choose to give the place to another CD. This dynamic is in favor of domestic mainstream artists. With the shift to digital distribution it becomes easier to cultivate global niche markets because it effectively is free to make the music accessible, which significantly increases diversity of the supply that is profitable to make available to listeners.

Accessibility is, however only the first step on the way to building an international audience. Streaming services have more than 30 million tracks available, but 20% of these tracks have never been played (Rego 2013). This illustrates very well that accessibility alone is not enough. If musicians want to cultivate and sustain an audience, they depend on marketing and media attention. Local business partners typically have professional networks among venues, media and other tastemakers in their local region, as well as specific cultural knowledge about music scenes. This local knowledge and network is important when trying to break a new artist.

From this perspective, there is a fundamental difference between small local and large international record companies. In Denmark local Danish companies represent the major labels (and manage music from domestic sub labels). This structure has several consequences for Danish artists' opportunities for pursuing an international career. On the one hand these companies have a strong international network in their sister companies in other territories. But on the other side, the contracts often tie artists to exactly these companies and the artist is therefore dependent on the Danish office's ability to convince their international colleagues to invest in promoting the music in their territory. For artists on smaller labels, the case is often the opposite. These companies rarely have a formalized relation to international business partners. This has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, it means that they often have few resources to allocate to the task of pushing the artist to international markets. On the other hand, this opens for establishing partnerships with independent local actors, which increases the probability that these partners commit themselves to the task of actively promoting the Danish artist on their market. In these cases digital media have a crucial impact on the ability to establish professional relations because the ability to connect to international networks within niche genres has been strengthened by social media and digital distribution (Mjøs 2012).

This section has primarily focused on the market for recorded music. In the light of the emphasis on the shift in revenue streams towards exploitation of rights and concerts in the beginning of this chapter, it might seem paradoxical to give this perspective such weight. This disposition, however, reflects the changed relationship between recorded music and these other business areas. Where touring and use of music in radio, TV and movies was previously perceived as promotion recorded music, the relationship is now in any cases the exact opposite. A music release is often treated as an investment that is not expected to yield a profit, but which is necessary to create demand for concerts, and to have a recording that can be exploited through

performance in media contexts. This is particularly true for artists that try to cultivate international niche markets. For them, revenue from sales af streaming of recorded music will often be marginal, but it is a prerequisite for convincing local promoters and venues that the artist is able to draw an audience to a show. In this connection, digital distribution and social media are crucial sources of data on the geographical dispersion of an artist's fan bases. But at the same time it is necessary to point out that there are significant national differences in the reach of digital distribution. A good example of this is the German market, which is one of the primary export markets for Danish music. Here physical formats (primarily CDs) accounted for 77.4% of revenue from recorded music in 2013 (Bundesverband Musikindustrie 2014).

The growing market for placement of music in movies, TV and commercials (so-called 'synchronization' or 'synch') is similarly predominantly a business that builds on the original investment in recording the music. Here, too, the likelihood of success is intimately tied to international networking, which is strengthened through digitalization's possibilities of fast and frictionless communication.

Is This a Digital Revolution?

Digitalization of music production and distribution has often been called a 'revolution'. Implied in this phrase is an idea that the digitalization constitutes a radical break with the economic and institutional organization of music industries. The term 'revolution' is however associated with paradigmatic changes in existing roles and power structures, and even though the potential for changes of this character undoubtedly has been present, the actual developments, if anything, constitute a 'digital evolution' of the music business. Because even though digitalization has had significant consequences for the business models, organization and power relations, the prediction about an equalization of the conditions for stars and middle-layer musicians, as well as the expectation that record companies would become redundant when everybody could disseminate their music freely, has been both been overstatements.

The democratization of cultural production in the network society can be understood in relation to two aspects: who has the *freedom* to do what, and who has the *power* to do what (Benkler 2011, p. 723). When I argue that the changes in the music industries do not constitute a revolution, it is because changes primarily concern one of these

aspects. Musicians and audiences have increased their *freedom* to produce and disseminate music independently from traditional business actors. But the recording industry has, through rethinking their business areas and investment strategies, retained its *power* to make a crucial difference for music's ability to find an audience.

The term 'digital evolution' in this sense covers an iterative process where music industry actors gradually have adapted to new media and revenue streams. Record companies might have lost their monopoly on production and distribution, but they are still central to the labor of promoting new music. And through changes in their business model they have secured shares of new revenue sources. The effect of this is that there might have been a small empowerment of artists but it doesn't constitute a power shift.

Case Studies

The first part of this dissertation has analyzed how digitalization has affected the structural conditions for professional artists at a macro level. These case studies will focus on analyzing how these musicians deal with two central and intertwined aspects of digitalization of the music business, namely new forms of professional organization – what can be called an 'entrepreneurial turn' – and new communication practices.

The case studies focus on middle-layer musicians from Copenhagen and Boston. These two cities have been chosen as starting points because they share some of the same dynamics, but in different contexts. Both Copenhagen and Boston have a lively indie rock music scene. Having a large population of young students and professionals have had similar effects in the two cities, creating demand for music venues that program alternative (though not avant-garde) music, which in turn provides the basis for existence of professional musicians supplying this music.

The objective of this study is not to create an encompassing typology of musicians' practices, but rather to illustrate the complexity and diversity of practices among professional niche musicians. In line with this, the four cases have been selected primarily because they each illustrate specific themes that have emerged as recurrent through my fieldwork. The cases all have idiosyncratic characteristics, but together they illustrate how the changing conditions for professional organization and communication are negotiated in different ways.

This also means that the musicians and bands selected for these case studies are not stereotypical indie bands or musicians. There are two reasons for choosing this. First, focusing on a very narrow conception of artists would also limit the ability to analyze the diversity in professional practices, and the differentiation in modes of organization and communication is a key point in this dissertation. Second, the variety of different artist selected also reflects my wish to cases that set out directions. They are artists that have made reflexive choices about their professional practices, and have had at least some success in pursuing their path. In that sense, this is not a general assessment of the conditions for professional indie artists.

The objective of these case studies is to embrace the changing roles of professional middle-layer musicians from organizational and communication perspectives. As it will hopefully become clear, some of these changes are related to social and economical changes, and these will be treated as secondary themes when relevant.

Because the scenes in Copenhagen and Boston are not substantial enough to support the career of the type of middle-layer musicians studied here, it is necessary to relate the scenes to other scenes. In order to do this, I draw on the classification of scenes developed by Bennett and Peterson. They distinguish between three general types of scenes:

> The first, local scene, corresponds most closely with the original notion of a scene as clustered around a specific geographic focus. The second, translocal scene, refers to widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle. The third, virtual scene, is a newly emergent formation in which people scattered across great physical spaces create the sense of a scene via fanzines and, increasingly, through the Internet (Bennett & Peterson 2004, pp. 6-7)

Across the cases, the perceptions of translocal scenes are different. Because the domestic market is so small, Danish musicians perceive translocal scenes as equivalent to international scenes, whereas the American artists connect to other local scenes within the US.

In the analysis of the four cases, some perspectives and themes are recurrent across cases. Although this might be perceived as redundancy, it serves the cause of illustrating shared conditions and values across cultural differences, from DIY to major label, from Copenhagen to Boston, and from electro-rock to acoustic folk. And I have made an effort to also highlight the unique aspects of each case.

The analyses draw on a wide variety of empirical material gathered at concerts, in closed and open online forums, to supplement semi-structured qualitative interviews. Through participant observation at concerts in small and medium-sized venues in Copenhagen and Boston I have experienced the nature of interaction between artists and audiences. The empirical material gathered online includes participant observation of the artists' communication practices on social media (primarily through

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram), as well as articles, texts, interviews gathered from the artists' own websites, music blogs, music magazines, and newspapers.

As outlined in the introduction, my primary research interest is to understand how the musicians themselves understand their conditions, and how that understanding informs the choices they make when trying to adapt to new professional organization and communication practices when trying to establish and maintain a professional career.

Because conditions change for the artists as a consequence of structural changes in the music business, as well as in relation to the development of the individual artist's career, I draw on the artists' own accounts of historic and biographic elements that can help illuminate how these two aspects influence the artists' choices, motivations and practices.

The musicians represented in the four cases all have experiences with varying degrees of independency from established record labels, but have made different choices based on different interests. What binds these interests together, is that they have organized their professional lives in idiosyncratic ways, but drawing on the same type of deliberations over how to tackle the challenges and opportunities offered in the modern music business and media landscape. The overarching theme of this part of the dissertation is therefore to examine how the entrepreneurial approach to four musicians' careers have developed in a dialectic relationship with changes in media, technology, and industry organization.

In order to analyze how professional middle-layer musicians negotiate these conditions, I will now turn to case studies of four musicians. Two of the artists, Rasmus Stolberg and Jens Skov Thomsen, are based in Copenhagen, and the other two, Brian Barthelmes and Ellis Paul, are based in New England, with Boston as a central hub. The four case studies are presented individually. Reflecting the chronology of fieldwork and analysis, I present first the two Danish cases and then the two American cases. The cases are preceded by a short introduction to the music scenes in Copenhagen and Boston respectively. The general analytical themes that emerge from the four cases are developed in part three of the dissertation.

7

Introduction to the Copenhagen Music Scene

The music scene in Copenhagen constitutes the majority of the Danish music scene. In both economic and cultural terms, with a few exceptions, the major industry actors (record labels, booking agencies, newspapers, magazines and broadcast media) are located in Copenhagen. As a result, a majority of Danish musicians aspiring to a professional career tend to be based there too.

This introduction outlines the indie rock music scene in Copenhagen focusing on four perspectives: 1) the bands and artists that musicians and the music they play, 2) the live venues, 3) the non-institutionalized organizations, 4) the media platforms for local music, and 4) the relation to international music scenes.

The Copenhagen scene is rarely addressed as a coherent scene. Instead, different genre scenes are usually identified at a national level. The two musicians that I am concerned with in this chapter have both moved to Copenhagen to pursue their careers. In Copenhagen, indie pop/rock, often with an electronic infusion, has been a significant cultural force both in the borderland between mainstream and independent music spheres since the mid 2000's. Bands like Turboweekend, Spleen United, and Mew have been among the more mainstream acts, and they have been complemented by a number of artists and bands who gain slightly less media attention like Choir of Young Believers, I Got You on Tape, Under Byen, When Saints Go Machine, and Figurines. Although these bands all have Copenhagen and Denmark as their primary scene, they are also closely connected to a transnational indie rock scene. They are part of the scene connected to the international media sphere of online music magazines such as Pitchfork and Stereogum. In Denmark, this new embodiment of the indie rock scene also enjoyed the attention of taste-making institutions like the National Broadcasting Corporation's radio P3, the music magazine Soundvenue, as

well as Denmark's largest publicly subsidized rock venue Vega. The effect of this has been the establishment of a scene that – though it is not a tightly bound community – has become centered on various small independent labels, managements, and venues.

The live venues in Copenhagen are to a large degree supported economically by municipal and government funds. Accordingly, from a cultural political perspective, they are often divided into three types. The so-called *Regional Music Venues* (regionale spillesteder), *Fee subsidized music venues* (honorarstøttede spillesteder), and *other actors*, which covers other cultural state institutions as well as festivals and commercial music venues (Københavns Kommunes Kultur- og Fritidsforvaltning 2015). Public subsidy of music venues is the primary form of support for popular music in Denmark, and the subsidy is granted with an expectation that the venues enhance musical quality and diversity, as well as conditions for niche genres an emerging talent (Kulturministeriet 2012). The effect of this is that emerging and alternative music enjoy good opportunities for getting exposure at established venues, as well as getting a fair fee for their work.

These institutions are supplemented by independent alternative music scenes in Copenhagen, which are characterized by a diversity of non-institutionalized organizations. These organizations especially take the form of particular community based venues like Mayhem (Punk, noise rock), Loppen (rock), and Stengade 30 (Dancehall, Ska, Reggae), small independent labels like Escho (with a close connection to the comunity around Mayhem), Tambourhinoceros, Tigerspring, ILK, Crunchy Frog, and Auditorium, as well as festivals like Strøm (electronica), Frost (alternative rock), Trailerpark (rock, electronica), Distortion (electronica). Another common characteristic of these communities is that they have an international outlook. Although local in their organization, they generally orient themselves towards a transnational scene within their specific genre or style.

These scenes emerge in opposition to the dominance of commercial and public institutions. Like the *microscenes* conceptualized by Grazian (Grazian 2013), these scenes build on a DIY approach, but unlike Grazian's conception of *microscenes,* they are clustered around venues, labels, and other venues and performance spaces like festivals or rehearsal spaces. The result is a form of organization that merges some of the entrepreneurialism that Holt (Holt 2013) connects with a gentrification process and the countercultural communities of microscenes.

In terms of mainstream media coverage, radio is still the leading way of music discovery (Koda 2013), dominated by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, which accounts for 76% of radio listening (Thunø 2014). As a state institution under the Ministry of Culture, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation is obliged to meet a minimum quota of 30% Danish music in their programs. In general, Danish music enjoys a privileged position in national broadcast and print media. This is illustrated for example by the relatively high representation of Danish artists among the top of the charts[5], where local artists are regularly more popular than international superstars.

However, the limited size of the Danish population (5.7 million) means that even though alternative and emerging musicians enjoy some privileges, they only have a limited audience within Denmark, which makes it a challenge to build an audience big enough to support a professional career.

Even though Copenhagen arguably has a reputation as a cool city, and boasts a lively scene, it remains peripheral to the scenes in e.g. Berlin, London and New York. The peripheral position of Copenhagen and the limited size of the domestic market have the consequence that there are two dominant ways to establish a professional career. One is a national approach, which consists of becoming a mainstream hit that can compete with international superstars within the local market. This makes it possible to charge high ticket prices at concerts and high fees for performing at major festivals within Denmark. This is however usually only possible for a few artists that produce different varieties of pop music. Often this is done with strong support from a major label and one of the dominant booking agencies. The other way is through an international approach. Here bands try to connect to an international scene in order to get access to larger music markets. Particularly the German market has been in focus in the recent years due to its proximity as well as its position as the third largest music market in the world in terms of recorded music (IFPI 2015c). Especially musicians that are part of non-mainstream scenes, this is also a way to find a substantial audience for their music, even if it appeals only to a niche audience.

Both of the two Danish bands that I analyze in the case studies (Veto and Efterklang) have taken an international approach to their career, but they have done it in very different ways, and out of very different reasons. Of the two bands, Veto has been the

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[5] Out of the top 20 albums of 2014, 12 were Danish (IFPI 2015b)

most successful within the Danish market. They have enjoyed a relatively high level of media attention and radio airplay, which made them part of the mainstream category, especially with their first two albums, but have gradually moved to a position that is more peripheral on the Danish scene. Efterklang's music is more experimental and alternative, which from the start has placed them in a peripheral position in the national music market and media landscape, even though they have enjoyed significant artistic recognition for their music. Although not strongly connected to any particular community on the Copenhagen scene, they share the international outlook and leaning towards non-institutionalized organization.

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Case 1: Rasmus Stolberg and Efterklang

Rasmus Stolberg is the bass player and manager of the Danish rock band Efterklang. Stolberg grew up on the tiny island Als in the rural Southern Denmark. It was here he founded the band that would later become Efterklang with two childhood friends. In the beginning they were a typical rock band with two guitars, bass and drums that had *Radiohead* and the Danish alternative rock band *Kashmir* as their idols and sources of inspiration. They participated in the talent show *DM I Rock* in 1999, which had become an institution on the Danish rock scene in the 1990s because it had proved itself as a platform for breaking some of the most successful Danish artist in those years (Most notably *Kashmir* and *Dizzy Mizz Lizzy*) (Jensen 2013). After seeing Stolberg's father's video recording of their performance in the finals, they realized that they were not going to be as good as their idols. Instead the three friends moved to Copenhagen to pursue their ambition of breaking through as a band. They spent the next two years working hard in the rehearsal space, but not playing concerts. A distinctive new sound was found through experimenting with computers and string instruments as integral parts of their songwriting along with more traditional rock instruments.

I met Stolberg in 2006 when he was a student in the music industries program I taught at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen. This gave me knowledge of how he and Efterklang worked. What makes Efterklang a particularly interesting case study is that although they are not particularly well known anywhere in the world, they have many small enthusiastic fan bases in many parts of the world. The key to achieving this has been a creative use of digital media for media experiences and communication, as well as an international mindset that makes it possible for them to tour most of the world with a good turnout everywhere they play. The first year after

the release of their most recent album *Piramida,* they played more than 130 shows in 19 countries, spanning from premiering the album at a live concert with they Sidney Symphony Orchestra in the Sydney Opera House, over a club in Poland, to a small bar in Denver.

Efterklang have utilized the opportunities offered by digital media to grow international niche audiences. In this sense, they are not a typical example of a Danish indie rock band. Danish colleagues and industry professionals in fact often recognize them as an extraordinary example for imitation. My reason for choosing them as a case is exactly this. They offer a compelling example of a band that has created a professional career as a niche-oriented rock band with high artistic credibility (Dudu 2005), particularly because they are an example of how this can be achieved working on a micro-level as a network organization rather than on the macro-level of international corporations.

The case study focuses on three themes:

1) *Organizational principles.* Here, I focus on how Efterklang's DIY approach has evolved and matured over the years, as their career has taken flight. From starting as a necessity because no label wanted to invest in their music to a deliberate choice that gives the band greater ownership of their music. This development also covers a gradual professionalization and division of tasks among the band's members, which is closely related to this thesis' main theme of emerging entrepreneurialism among professional indie artists.

2) *Development and communication of identity.* Here, I turn to Stolberg and Efterklang's practice for production and communication of identity and experiences through media texts. I will employ Jenkins' conception of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins 2003; 2006; 2007) as a starting point for this analysis, and make a particular point of the doubleness of communication for Efterklang, whose media texts are simultaneously content and promotion. As a part of the analysis, Stolberg's use of different digital media platforms is mapped systematically.

3) *Business models.* Here, I will briefly account for Efterklang's business model, and how it relates closely to the band's choices regarding organization and communication, but also influenced by economic and technologic framework conditions shared with other similar bands.

Although digitalization has undoubtedly affected workflows as well as creative opportunities and obstacles, this dissertation's focus is primarily on the changing roles of musicians in the contemporary media culture, and I therefore only touch upon the changed conditions of production in relation to these issues.

Organizational Principles

Evolution of a DIY approach

Efterklang has always had a DIY approach to most aspects of their career. However, the nature of this approach has changed as their career has progressed. Stolberg and his band mates have gradually taken a more entrepreneurial approach to their career. In this section, I will analyze the process Efterklang has been through, and I will seek to develop the understanding of their entrepreneurial approach, both the simple division of labor and organization, as well as the motivations that lies behind. I will analyze how the driving force behind Efterklang's entrepreneurial practices is to make projects, experiences, and music happen. And I will analyze how entrepreneurship for Stolberg and Efterklang is a non-strategic approach. Both of these points differ significantly from a traditional conception of entrepreneurship, in which there is an expectation of a market focus as well as a managerial approach to innovation and organization (see e.g. Drucker 1985/2015; Schumpeter 1934).

Furthermore, Efterklang's relation to international networks will be addressed. As a band that makes music that does not appeal to a mainstream market, I will argue that Efterklang's connection to what Bennett & Peterson (2004) call translocal and virtual scenes is what enables them to sustain a professional career.

Efterklang started booking their own concerts and released their debut EP *Springer* in 2003 themselves as a limited edition CD with 500 hand-sewn fake fur covers. The EP incited interest from the small British The Leaf Label that signed the band for their debut album *Tripper*, which was released in 2004. The album was well received in the international indie music community, and received good reviews from, among others, the leading American alternative music webzine Pitchfork[6].

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[6] http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/2916-tripper/

The second EP *Under Giant Trees* (2007) and second album, *Parades* (2007), cemented this position. While still releasing their music independently in Denmark, and collaborating with The Leaf Label internationally, they got significant international attention through great reviews. The influential indie music webzine, Drowned in Sound, even called the *Parades* album " [...] their *Dark Side Of The Moon*, their *OK Computer*; it's the album Björk wishes she'd conjured in her mind when realising *Vespertine*"[7]. After the release of *Parades*, the band was approached by producer at the Danish Broadcasting Corporation with a proposal to work with the Danish National Chamber Orchestra. Even though this involves collaborating closely with a much bigger and more institutionalized orchestra, Efterklang's DIY approach was still present in the sense that they, with the help of composer and arranger Karsten Fundal, arranged the music for orchestra and band, and Efterklang performed the full album together with the orchestra in September 2008 in costumes and an elaborate stage setting by the same design duo, Hvass&Hannibal, which has also designed their cover art. The concert was recorded and released as an album and DVD.

For the release of the third studio album *Magic Chairs* (2010), Efterklang signed a deal with the acclaimed British indie label 4AD, which had been a dream for the band from the beginning of their career. Stolberg told me that 4AD was the first label to receive a copy of the *Springer* EP when the band had a hard time identifying relevant international labels to work with. The partnership with 4AD continued on their latest studio album *Piramida* (2012), as well as the live album *The Piramida Concert* (2013), which was recorded with Copenhagen Phil along a recipe similar to the collaboration with the Danish National Chamber Orchestra on *Parades*.

The DIY approach is a strong undercurrent in Efterklang's work. Even though they have partnered with established indie labels for most of their releases, they have insisted on releasing their music on the Danish market through their own label Rumraket. This had been the way to get their first EP out, and they were already well underway with releasing the debut album in a limited edition of 1.000 handmade copies when The Leaf Label approached them. Because they were already ready to release the album to the Danish market on Rumraket, the two parts agreed that The Leaf Label released the album internationally, but Efterklang retained the rights to release it through Rumraket in Denmark. With the deal with 4AD they expanded the

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[7] http://drownedinsound.com/releases/11167/reviews/2470983

model to include all of Scandinavia. For Efterklang, this makes an important difference.

> When you tell them, over in England or New York, that we would like to keep the rights to the Danish territory ourselves, then they think 'okay, they want to keep the smallest music market we have. That's okay. Then they will just get a little bit less here and here'. They don't think abput it, but it would correspond to Dirty projectors telling Domino, or Grizzly Bear telling Warp, that they want New York themselves next time they are negotiating a contract. It is our native country, and it is our best market, especially if you relate it to the size of the population. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

Even though releasing their music themselves has turned out to be significant for Efterklang, it was not a strategic decision driven by economic incentives:

> The economics and all that, that was not something we thought so much about in the early days. [...] We never thought we would be able to make a living off of this. It was something we did because we had to. Because it was extremely exciting, and also because we had some dreams. [...] I had never considered that I would be able to make a living from playing music. Never. It was actually not until the second record that I started realizing that I might be able to, actually. So in the beginning it was mostly about imitating what others did, and thinking 'okay, that's how you do it. Let's try to do that too'. And then, because we had started this Rumraket label – that was kind of where we started, where we came from – then it made sense to say 'well maybe we should continue releasing ourselves in Denmark?', because we were actually quite happy with having this label. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

In this perspective, it might seem paradoxical that Efterklang has become an often referred to example in the Danish music scene of how to combine non-mainstream artistic ambitions with a sustainable economy. However, the initial limited interest in economic and organizational matters was gradually replaced by a more deliberate approach that I will return to later.

Being a DIY band that engages in media production entails many work tasks that are not directly related to music making. In Efterklang, these tasks have gradually come to be the domain of Stolberg. The band operates with a division of tasks where Stolberg is a member of the band, but has very little to do with the process of making music. He plays the bass when they are touring, but most often leaves composition and studio recording entirely to the other band members.

> I don't compose in Efterklang. The way I am creative in Efterklang is by coming up with projects or ideas that I find exciting and where the music is the centre of rotation. [...] We have a very clear definition of who does what in the band – or how the roles are divided. The main thing is that what we seek, and what we fight hard for, is to be able to create things together Me, Mads and Casper. That we can fantasize and come up with ideas, music, films or anything, totally freely, and create these things together and make them happen, and also to create them independently of economic interest or other interests. And when we have found something that all three of us really think is something special, then we are very intent on doing anything we can to also share it with as many people as possible – or at least making sure it reaches an audience. And in that sense, we are maybe a bit more committed than other bands are, due to my role. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

Before analyzing how Efterklang has organized themselves, it is important to notice the how Stolberg addresses the band's aim. He highlights the creative and productive endeavors, and rhetorically reduces the importance of economic incentives or impediments. This is important because the level of professionalism suggests that Efterklang has an entrepreneurial approach to their career, and in this perspective the hierarchy between creative production and economy is what sets Stolberg's practices apart from what we would usually expect from an entrepreneur. Enhancing the level professionalism is not about maximizing profit, but rather about creating economic freedom to realize the artistic projects that the band dreams up.

Stolberg's dual role as both musician and manager is not a rarity among professional niche artists. Bands often divide roles among each other, causing some members to take more responsibility for practical and economic matters than others. The degree to which Efterklang has divided the roles is, however, more extreme than most. Parallel

to Efterklang's ascent, Stolberg completed a BA in Music Management from the Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen. This gives him a more professional approach to the role of self-management than most musicians have. Furthermore, Stolberg also runs their label Rumraket on which they have released all their records in Denmark (the last two albums in all of Scandinavia). In the period between 2005 and 2011, Rumraket also released music by other artists, including European releases of bands such as Slaraffenland (DK), Taxi Taxi! (SE), Erik Levander (SE) and Canon Blue (US). Rumraket was notably also behind the European release of Grizzly Bear's (US) debut album, *Horn of Plenty*[8].

There are several interesting aspects about Stolberg's role in Efterklang. One is the level of professionalism and entrepreneurship that it brings to a relatively niche-oriented band. The other is the extent to which it defines development and execution of extramusical projects as part of the creative and artistic expression of the band. Although none of these aspects are direct consequences of digitalization, they are intimately intertwined with the new affordances in digital technology in various forms.

In the pre-digital music economy, a band like Efterklang would have had a hard time in a small market like Denmark. The small Danish population (5.7 million) and the distinct boundaries provided by national press and broadcast media would have made it almost impossible to build a substantial fan base for a band whose music is not suited for mainstream media (Even though the Danish Broadcasting Corporation has an obligation to promote new Danish music, Efterklang has only had few songs in regular rotation). Without an international vision, Efterklang would arguably not be able to build an audience big enough to support a professional career. In Stolberg's own words, what characterizes Efterklang is that they are "[...] not particularly famous anywhere in the world, but we [Efterklang] have small dedicated fan bases around the world" (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]. This kind of international vision has to a large extent been possible because of the emergence of networked media. As mentioned earlier, Efterklang's breakthrough coincided with the prime years of MySpace, and Stolberg and his bandmates utilized the platform both to build a fan base, but equally important, they also built a professional network. This practice is similar to what Mjøs found in his analysis of similar practices among Norwegian bands (Mjøs 2012, p. 104). By connecting to *translocal* and *virtual* scenes (Bennett & Peterson 2004), Efterklang

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[8] http://efterklang.net/home/category/rumraket/

has been able to address a global niche market for their music, end thereby build a sustainable career.

Also the lowered costs of recording and distributing music offered by digital technology have been central for Efterklang, especially in the early stages of their career. The homemade, self-released debut EP would not have been possible in the pre-digital era. Furthermore, this starting point is identified by Stolberg as something that shaped later choices of the band. When they eventually signed with an established record company, they had already built experience in some of these practices, so even though I argue in chapter 6 that lowered costs of production has been an convenient opportunity for record companies to shift risk to artists, Stolberg articulates this negotiation as a strength for the band because having produced the album themselves makes it possible for them to negotiate favorable conditions where the band retains the rights to release their music in their most lucrative market (Denmark).

The different approaches outlined in the paragraphs above might give the impression of a band with an exceptionally entrepreneurial approach to their career. But notably, releasing music independently and pursuing international networks and audiences was initially not a strategic goal for Stolberg or his bandmates. Rather, it came to be more or less out of coincidence. As pragmatic choices that were not part of a grand scheme.

The gradual differentiation of Stolberg's role as a managing band member is, however, also a prerequisite for the vast catalogue of extra-musical projects that characterize the band. Funding a trip to an abandoned Russian mining town to record ambient sounds to implement in an upcoming album, or organizing 1,200 private-public screenings of a documentary are tasks that require a considerable amount of work. In this sense, some of the characteristics that set Efterklang apart from other bands artistically are rendered possible only because of the radical division of task between band members.

Even though Stolberg is pivotal in the practical organization of Efterklang's professional lives, it is worth noting that he – like most artist managers – works together with external partners. Besides collaborating with representatives of their record label (4AD) and publisher (Sony/ATV), he also draws on the local network and

knowledge from local booking agents in USA, UK, Ireland, Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Asia, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, and Italy.[9]

Construction and Communication of Identity and Experiences

Non-Generic Transmedia Storytelling

Efterklang engages in a multitude of mediated and non-mediated practices, but to counter the risk that the sheer number of different activities would add up to an unfocused cacophony of ideas, the band seeks to make the different endeavors unfold within a distinct Efterklang universe. Even though there is not one encompassing narrative about Efterklang, the band tries to make the different media texts add up to a clear conception of who Efterklang is.

In the following analysis, I draw on the concept 'transmedia storytelling' by media scholar Henry Jenkins (Jenkins 2003; 2006), which I introduced in chapter 5. To briefly sum up, Jenkins' conception of transmedia storytelling is that it builds on the user practices in convergence culture of curating, remixing and disseminating media texts across media platforms, and that it represents a form of storytelling based on a complex fictional world containing multiple independent but interrelated narratives.

In this case I use the concept of transmedia storytelling in relation to the ad hoc productions of a small independent band. This form of transmedia storytelling is not as formalized and comprehensive as the forms identified by Jenkins, and it also differs significantly from the musical and visual styles of major culture franchises (from pop stars to the Disney franchise). In this sense, what Efterklang represents is rather a non-generic use of the techniques associated with the concept.

Using transmedia storytelling in this way raises at least three questions:

First, music is not usually conceived to be primarily concerned with delivering a grand narrative. Even though songs, music videos and even albums may have a narrative character, the only recurring narrative is usually located at the level of the artist persona. So how does transmedia storytelling transfer to a context where the narrative

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[9] http://efterklang.net/home/info/

is concerned with the identity and authenticity of one or more persons rather than fictional characters and plots?

Second, the concept has, until now, primarily been applied to narratives that have movies, TV or literature as their core (Matrix, Lost and Harry Potter have been used as exemplary cases). But how does the concept transfer to music? Coordinating media production across multiple platforms usually involves big investments. Traditionally production budgets are significantly higher within the movie industry compared to the music industry, which is probably the reason why the only full-blown attempts at transmedia storytelling have been carried out by major international stars like Nine Inch Nails, Jay Z and Gorillaz (Vasile & Godest 2011).

Lastly, placing popular music in a specific context through construction and communication of a distinct artist persona is not a novelty. So how does transmedia storytelling add to traditional storytelling in the music industry?

In the case of Efterklang, the media texts frame the band persona through different devises. Through collaborations with visual artists (both graphic designers and art film directors) and symphony orchestras, they establish a connection to serious art worlds. Through documentaries, radio montages and interviews they tell a story about who they are as individuals and how they create their music. And through private-public screenings and intensive touring, they convey a notion of a band that is at eye level with their fans.

In that way the notion that popular music is often understood in relation to the artist persona is not new. But the deliberate and controlled communication of artistic persona with a consistent visual and sonic profile across multiple media has usually been connected more to stars like Madonna than niche musicians like Efterklang (see e.g. Goodwin 1992). The lack of access to traditional broadcast and print media has been an important impediment for smaller artists, due to these media's disposition towards mainstream artists that are relevant to a larger audience. Furthermore, costs of production, especially of videos, have traditionally been too high to make it a reasonable investment for niche musicians.

However both of these impediments have been minimized by the technological development that has lowered both the price and accessibility of media production.

This enables a band like Efterklang to act as media producers rather than just musicians in a way that has previously been impossible.

The effects of digitalization are thus related to the creation of new revenue streams, and new marketing opportunities, but it also affects the ontological aspects of Efterklang's art. In line with what Jenkins (Jenkins 2007) notes about *The Matrix,* the diversity in media texts leads to a situation where there is no ur-text to the Efterklang universe. Each of Efterklang's media texts (music, videos, concerts, documentaries, etc.) can be understood on their own, or they can additively be combined in a multitude of combinations depending on the taste, interests and engagement of the individual fan.

Furthermore, Efterklang taps in to the community building potential of convergence culture by providing fans with media texts that invite sharing. These include more conventional texts such as online streaming of music videos and live performances, but also tie into the more tight social connections in offline life through private-public screenings.

As noted earlier, music is not usually conceived to be primarily concerned with delivering a grand narrative evolving around fictional characters and plots. This also holds true for Efterklang. Even though *Piramida* has been connected to the narrative of its conception, there is no underlying narrative running through all media texts. Instead Efterklang rely on two factors in creating a consistent transmedia universe.

The first factor is an overarching visual and sonic profile to frame every media product. In order to achieve this, they deliberately retain a great deal of control of both graphical and musical production. The second factor is that the narrative is located at the level of the band and concerned with portraying the identity and authenticity of the artists rather than with distinct plots.

Media texts

The core text in the Efterklang universe is the music. The band controls the music production quite tightly. Although they have had friends remix some of their songs, they were never satisfied with the results and have stopped doing this (Interview with Rasmus Stolberg, December 2012). But apart from making music, Efterklang also produces other media texts.

Rumraket is just one example of the feature that perhaps most clearly sets Efterklang's practices apart from traditional practices among musicians: They extent their narrative further than these traditional sources of artistic production. The band has several projects running parallel to the primary activity of being a recording and touring band.

One illustrating example of this is related to the album *Piramida* (2012), which was composed and recorded with the incorporation of processed sounds collected in an abandoned Russian mining town at the island Spitzbergen off the coast of Norway. This is in itself a catching narrative, but the band didn't just tell the story to journalists and bloggers at the release of the album. They where accompanied by the filmmaker Andreas Kofoed, who subsequently made a documentary that is at once a historic account of past life in the ghosttown Piramida.

With such a strong narrative, one could expect this to be the sole focus of promotion for the release of the album. But instead Efterklang initially premiered their new songs at a concert with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Sydney Opera House. While this might distract attention from the strong narrative of the conception of their new album, it signaled continuity to their fans as their album *Parades* (2007) led to a short tour where they performed a version scored for symphonic orchestras with local orchestras (and a live album and concert film, *Performing Parades,* 2009*)*. At the same time these collaborations potentially breaks Efterklang to an audience outside the scene that they had previously been associated with.

When the album was released, it was preceded by an album trailer posted on the band's media sites, and the international release of *Piramida* in September 2012 was marked by a performance of the album at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York together with The Wordless Music Orchestra, and the concert was streamed on the Internet.

One month later, on November 1st, Andreas Kofoed's documentary *The Ghost of Piramida* (2012) was premiered at the documentary film festival CPH:DOX, and over the following months it was screened at film festivals and art house cinemas across Europe, often with personal introductions by Rasmus Stolberg of Efterklang or the director Andreas Kofoed.

The Ghost of Piramida is an interesting case in itself. On one level, it is a documentary about Efterklang's journey to the abandoned Russian mining town Piramida to gather ambient recordings to be used as raw material for their upcoming album. At the same time, it is a historic document of life in the mining town when it was still active, told through the narrating voice and footage of the former Russian press officer of Piramida. But the film is also offers rich passages where footage of the abandoned town is presented, accompanied by Efterklang's music, in a way that closely resemble the aesthetics of a music video. This makes it possible for Efterklang to engage with audiences from different entry points. Existing fans of the band might enjoy this additional side to their artistic production, and understand the documentary in extension of the body of music videos from the band, or as a glimpse of the band's creative processes. But the documentary can also be understood as a documentary on its own, and therefore might appeal to fans of this film genre instead. In this sense a transmedial approach both expands the narrative about Efterklang, and simultaneously expands the potential audience for Efterklang's art.

When the wave of art cinema screenings ended, Efterklang announced that the film would soon be shown all around the world through what they called 'Private-Public Screenings'. Through social media they asked fans to sign up to host a screening of the film. The screening could be hosted in a private living room, a café, school auditorium, or any other space with adequate sound and video equipment. The only conditions where that the screening had to be free, public, have capacity for minimum 5 persons, and that the screening should be announced on the official website. From February to April 2013, the film was screened 812 times.[10]

Parallel to the screenings of *The Ghost of Piramida,* Efterklang embarked on an intensive tour with a 6-piece live band, and also played few concerts as a trio. Combining the different band line-ups, Efterklang has 117 concerts played or scheduled in the one-year period succeeding the release of *Piramida* in September 2012.

Although *Piramida* is arguably the most elaborate example of Efterklang's use of complimenting narratives as well as geographical place, it is worth noticing that the different types of productions are not unique for this release, but tie into previous endeavors by the band. The world premiere of *Piramida* with the Sydney Symphony

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[10] http://www.theghostofpiramida.com

Orchestra came into place because the orchestra had heard of Efterklang's collaboration with the Danish National Chamber Orchestra on the music from the album *Parades*.

Likewise, the concept of producing an art cinema documentary that borrows aesthetic effects from music video is not new. In 2011, Efterklang produced the film *An Island* together with the French filmmaker Vincent Moon, who had become a household name on the international indie music scene for his alternative live recordings (called 'Take Away Shows') of a wide variety of artist for the blog la Blogotheque[11]. The film took the band back to their native island Als, and featured alternative performances of the music from Efterklang's album *Magic Chairs* (2010) in collaboration with, among others, local school children and band members' parents. Like *Piramida*, *An Island* was promoted through 'Private-Public Screenings'. The film furthermore contains similarities to yet another Efterklang project, *Efterkids*. This project was launched in 2010 as an attempt to "raise awareness of the need for music education in public schools and same time collaborate with talented kids across the globe" [12]. On the project's website[13], sheet music and backing tracks for two of Efterklang's songs were available for download, enabling music school students to 'play along' with the music.

As mentioned earlier, the diverse media texts that Efterklang produce are tied together by an encompassing narrative. This is done through three primary devises:

First, Efterklang perceive their music as an essential part of the expression, that integrates the different activities. As Stolberg phrases it: "The music always comes before anything else we do. [...] That's the way we navigate in our projects. It is always the music that sets the direction for where we are going" (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated by this author].

Second, the band has a preoccupation with their visual appearance, which has manifested itself in a close collaboration with the design-duo Hvass&Hannibal. Nan Na Hvass of the duo is also Stolberg's wife, which has probably been a contributing factor in teaming up in the first place. However, the collaboration has clearly helped the band maintain a consistent (though dynamic) visual profile. Hvass&Hannibal's style of bright colors, stripes, geometrical figures, and intricate landscapes aligns well with Efterklang's music, which combines simple phrases to complex harmonic and

[11] http://en.blogotheque.net/serie/concert-a-emporter/
[12] http://efterklang.net/home/category/efterkids/
[13] http://www.4ad.com/features/efterkids/

rhythmic textures. The band not only collaborates with the design-duo for their cover art. The duo has also designed scenography for orchestra concerts and film credits, which helps tie the different aspects closer together. As can be seen in the following illustrations, the visual expressions of Efterklang have developed significantly over time, but always with elements (colors, shapes, the theme of otherworldliness) that carry over from previous expressions.

Cover of *Parades (2007)*
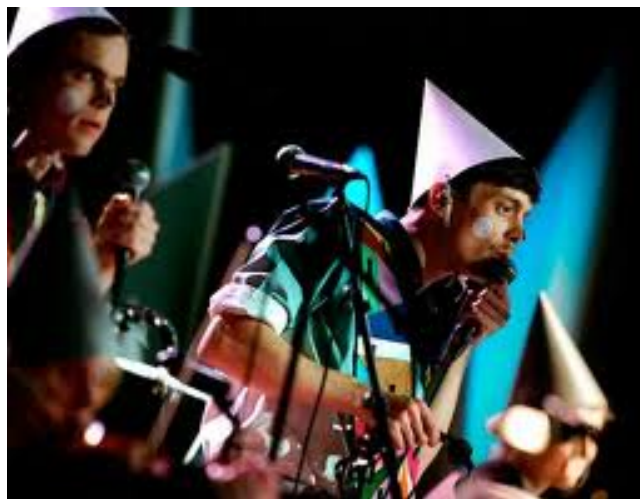
Photos from the *Performing Parades* concert.
Source: http://efterklang.net/home/discography/

Cover of *Performing Parades (2009)*

Cover of *Magic Chairs (2010)*

Press photo for *Piramida (2012)* (Andreas Kofoed)

Cover of *Piramida (2012)*

Screen shot from credits, *The Ghost of Piramida*

Photo from the *Piramida* concert with Sydney Symphony Orchestra

(Source: Efterklang Flickr[14])

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[14]   https://www.flickr.com/photos/efterklang-recordings/7287354560/in/album-72157631648849901/

For Stolberg, this collaboration is not only a convenient and cheap way to get their graphic work done. It is more like a way of getting as much devotion from the graphic artists as he puts into himself. When asked about the band's visual profile, Stolberg talks passionately about the design process:

> The cover. That is where it started for us [...] and it is extremely important to us, because we spend a year or a year-and-a-half on creating some music. Then it would be really frustrating if we gave it to a designer who, in two days, puts something together. It might be a nice job, but it wouldn't feel right for us. We want something worked out extremely thoroughly (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

He tells me that he thinks the visual presentation is integral to the band's identity, and goes on to reflect about why:

> I think it is because we have this history of creating our own handmade covers. And the label we signed with – the Leaf Label – he is actually also extremely concerned with cover art. So, I have really learned many things about cover art from him. He was always very ambitious about how you could modify a little on industry standards and get a unique product, which feels different and looks different but is actually just as cheap to produce. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

The third device is geographical space. By setting documentaries in places like Piramida and Als, premiere at CPH:DOX, and key concerts in venues and cultural institutions like Sydney Opera House and Metropolitan Museum of Art, they seek to tie their music to places with symbolic meanings. Piramida and Als are both locations that enhance the storytelling about Efterklang as an explorative band. CPH:DOX, The Sidney Opera House and Metropolitan Museum establish a connection between Efterklang and a high art sphere in hip cities that help them accrue cultural capital, and helps tie the band's identity to a globalized sense of place that supports their international profile.

The fourth thread that runs through the work of Efterklang is the effort to establish a narrative of the band members. Through the two documentaries, the band outlines

respectively their personal histories and their creative processes. These narratives are repeated and elaborated in media interviews and through their own digital media outlets (most importantly their website www.efterklang.net). Having the band members' identities in play also makes it easier for the audience to accept inconsistencies, as these can be understood as reflections of the plurality of personal interests.

Media Strategies

Having analyzed the nature of Efterklang's core media texts connected to their different artistic expressions, I will now turn to the way they employ different media strategies to communicate these texts to their audiences. I have particular focus on the duality of Efterklang's media practices. Efterklang's media texts are both content that can be consumed, and information about the band's activities that act as promotion. This duality affects the way Efterklang uses different media. They engage with fans to interact with them and create a personal bond with them, but they also do so to build a market for their music. And they provide media texts for their fans in order to build this relation, but they also seek to capitalize on the relation by demanding payment for some media texts. This section analyzes the motivations behind Stolberg and Efterklang's different media strategies.

Online networked media have a central position in Efterklang's media presence. Here the band have control over what and when things are being communicated, which also means that they can use it more strategically than other media, where they are always to some extent reliant on others to produce and disseminate content. Stolberg has a remarkably clear conception of the way he and his bandmates use media:

> We have our Efterklang website, which is the core. And that has been an realization after the MySpace days [...] when things just happened. We gradually built this gigantic MySpace page. And we met Peter, who plays with us now, through MySpace. We met Katinka, who plays in our band now, through MySpace. A lot of other bands and friends that we still see and have contact with, are people we met through MySpace. And because of that, we placed all our effort there. That was where we were, it was the core during those years. And when it then suddenly shifted, then we were too late in getting on Facebook, and we were too late in getting on

Twitter. As a band you can sometimes hit a gold rush moment when Facebook or Twitter gain momentum, where people are willing to like and add and click on everything. If you're there as a band, you can get a lot of likes or followers, and we missed that completely because we were caught up with MySpace, and held on to it for way too long. But what we learned from it was that that we could obviously move on to the next social media, but at some point that too will go under. So we agreed that we had to have a new website, which could, in some way, aggregate everything. So if you, for example, go to our website right now, you will see the five or ten latest tweets, and if you want to see more, then you can click through to our Twitter profile. If you go to our photo page on the website, then you will see that it displays images from our Flikr page. So we post photos to Flikr, and then they end up on our website. But even though I say it is the core, it is not where the traffic is. [...] if I post a new story to our website, I have to post a link on Facebook and Twitter and say 'now we have a new story here' to get readers.

Interviewer: So you use Facebook and Twitter to generate traffic to your site?

Stolberg: Yes, and we also use Facebook and Twitter as independent pages. That is the only two we use. We also use Flickr, but not as a social media, we only use that as a photo silo.

(Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

There are several interesting themes in this passage. First of all, Stolberg is reflexive about the way he and his bandmates use different media. He has been evaluating the band's practices and has a sense of not only their strategic use of each platform but also of the interplay between different platforms. Secondly, the current practices are not the product of a strategically planned effort to define the modes of engagement with the band's fans, but rather a result of a continuing process of trial and error. Thirdly, the band's current media practices have been shaped by the affordances and social norms of previous digital media platforms. Efterklang's early career coincides with the ascent of MySpace as the first social media with broad international appeal

among youths. This has had concrete effects for the way the band engages with their audiences.

> We always answer everything, at least on the email. [...] we don't do that on Facebook and so on, but if people write us, then we usually reply, and we have always liked that. It comes from back in the MySpace days where we used MySpace a lot. We accumulated like forty thousand fans or so on MySpace, and we used it in a way where when we toured we would have an application that synchronized with our MySpace profile. We could then say 'now we are in Paris', and then the 300 MySpace friends we had in Paris would appear on the screen, and we could then spend an hour sending private messages where we just added their names: 'Hi Jean Marie, we are playing tonight in this venue' and so on. And obviously a many people replied to that, and then we wrote back as well as we could, and we still try to do that. I think that is important. I don't think we have that barrier. I think the distance between our listeners and us is very short compared to other bands. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

The band doesn't have a proper communication strategy, but they have a well-ordered division of labor defining who is in charge of specific platforms. My impression when talking with Stolberg is that he has a very keen sense of the affordances and limitations of different social media platforms, and he also tells me that he occasionally does lectures for other musicians on how to use social media, but nevertheless he doesn't seem to think that Efterklang succeeds sufficiently in creating engagement from their fans.

> Sometimes when I look at for instance our Twitter page or Facebook page, then I get a bad taste in my mouth over the degree of self-promotion. [...] it is an absurd truth that you can work a half year putting together this tour in the US, and decide to spend all that money. Then you go and post a story on your website, put out a press release, and write on Twitter and on Facebook: 'Yeah! We are are going on a US tour. Here are all the dates'. And then you get a few hundred likes and a few comments. And that's all right. And the next day you write something random [...] for example there was this time when I posted a picture of myself eating a

giant ice cream, which got five hundred likes (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

This sense of inadequacy seems paradoxical. On the one hand Efterklang work hard at creating a bond with their fans, but the posts that elicit reactions from the fans are not necessarily the kind of posts that are closest to the heart of the band. From the examples mentioned by Stolberg, it is obvious that he has ambivalent feelings about wanting his communication with fans. On the one hand he aspires to create messages that engage and makes fans respond. On the other hand, the primary motivation for communicating in the first place is to create awareness about the band's music. However, there is not a direct link between the amount of money and effort that lie behind an update and the immediate response from fans.

Because the presence on social media is motivated by a desire to support a music profession, Stolberg and his bandmates are forced to balance a double-sidedness of attention. The one part is trying to maintain relationships with fans and increase the reach to new audiences. Within the architecture of Facebook, this is best done by creating content that incite fans to like, comment or share the updates. This speaks for posting more photos of the band eating ice cream. But likes, comments and shares are only weak indicators of engagement, and in order for the band to survive as professional musicians the attention from fans also need to be monetized.

One thing is the way the band approaches their use of digital media. But another thing is how it actually plays out.

Efterklang's digital universe stretches across several different platforms. They have a Facebook profile with more than 80,000 likes, a Twitter account with more than 14,000 followers, A webpage for the band, and independent webpages and social media profiles for several of their sideprojects (Rumraket, Efterkids, An Island, The Ghost of Piramida, and Liima). They are also affiliated with the Internet radio The Lake. In addition to these text-borne platforms, they also have profiles on YouTube, Soundcloud, Vimeo and Flickr, though these are primarily used to host content (music, video, images), and not used as stand alone ('social') media. Furthermore, Stolberg and the other individual members have their own personal social media profiles.

This means that Stolberg has to keep track of 24 individual digital media channels associated with his personal and professional life as musician and manager:

Efterklang	Website	Webshop
	Facebook	
	Twitter	
	YouTube	
	Soundcloud	
	Flickr	
	Newsletter	
Rumraket	Website	Webshop
	Newsletter	
	Vimeo	
An Island	Website	Webshop
	Facebook	
The Ghost of Piramida	Webpage	Webshop (Vimeo)
	Facebook	
Efterkids	Website	
The Lake	Website	
	Facebook	
	Soundcloud	
	Twitter	
	Newsletter	
Liima	Facebook	
	Soundcloud	
	Twitter	
Rasmus Stolberg	Facebook	

The band is more active on some platforms than others, but creation and maintenance of the profiles nevertheless inevitably involves considerable labor.

When analyzing the content of the different platforms, it becomes clear that although Stolberg says that there is no guiding strategy behind the way he and the band uses digital media, there is still a clear structure.

All of the band's independent sub-projects have a distinct website, which is 1) a basic source of information and 2) where there is product for sale, the website also hosts (or links to) a webshop. The websites all have unique layout, yet are still aesthetically within the same domain. This underpins the notion of separate projects that are still in some sense part of the same 'family'.

The sub-projects that involve content creation each have a Facebook page that makes it possible to connect with audiences through the platform that is the most widely adopted in Denmark. As Stolberg described earlier, these profiles are mostly used to provide information about the specific project (Concerts, film screenings, new releases, etc.). These are complemented with postings of a more back stage character, often showing the band members rehearsing, recording, setting up for a concert, or a tongue-in-cheek depiction of band members having fun. Where the side projects primarily have postings related to that specific project, the Efterklang profile functions more as a hub, and features postings about all of the band's different projects. In some occasions, the band recommends the work of colleagues (most often people that Efterklang are, or have been, collaborating with) by linking to a specific song or event.

Although the band sometimes responds to posts directed at them, the general tendency is that they use their profile mostly for one-way communication. In that sense, they don't utilize the opportunities for interaction with fans, but as Stolberg explains, the amount of work that goes into replying to every message becomes gradually harder as the fan base expands:

> Right now, for instance, I can't keep up any more. I have had this policy of replying to all emails about anything, no matter how studid it was, and I don't do that any more. (Rasmus Stolberg, personal interview, 18. December 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

In this sense, the function of social media (and Facebook in particular) is more and more as a marketing tool as the band gains success. But even though this is the primary effect, that doesn't mean that interaction is completely absent. It just means that Stolberg and his bandmates have to prioritize who they spend time on. In contrast

to the limited level of interaction in the open publicly accessible online spaces, Stolberg also tells stories about how he and the band have expanded their personal and professional networks through social media. These interactions take place at different levels. On the one level they have met some of the musicians they collaborate and tour with through social media. At another level, they have super fans that regularly write personal messages, and that continuously engage with most of the content they upload. The interactions with these fans also sometimes connects to meetings in connection with live shows, where these fans show up and continue the online conversation at the merchandise stand after the concert.

A third, and probably pretty unique, way that Efterklang and Stolberg interact with online audiences has been through the 'private public screenings'. This provides an interesting example of how the band has created a middle ground between the levels I mentioned above. In this case, the band converts a group of super fans to a part of their professional network, and utilize this network to expand knowledge and attention on their documentaries, and thereby also indirectly on the band and their music. It is however interesting that this process does not take place openly. Most of this interaction plays out through personal messages, and only the final product (the screenings) is visible to the rest of the world.

I have chosen to include Rasmus Stolberg's personal Facebook profile in the table above. I have chosen to do so because the distinction between private and professional communication is relatively blurred for Stolberg.

Business Models

Transmedia Storytelling as Business Model
Because of the duality of communication as both content and promotion, the notion on transmedia storytelling is closely connected to Efterklang's business model. It is one of the ways in which the band builds value through a band identity. In this sense, there is a dialectic relationship between the business model and the choices regarding organization, media texts, and media strategies outlined in the sections above. On the one hand, the business model is an outcome of the kind of music and art that Efterklang makes, the audience that it resonates with, and the motivations that drive the band's choices. But it is also formed by the way the band has chosen to organize, as

well as the band's aspiration towards a professional career. In this section I try to outline how these aspects mutually shape each other.

Being a niche band like Efterklang is often conceptualized as being a part of the *long tail* (Anderson 2006) of the music industry made possible by digital distribution. One often cited opposition against the business model of the long tail has been that it might well create profit for aggregators like record companies, distributors and music services, but for the individual artist the long tail just increases the number of competitors, making it harder for each to make a living. On the other hand, it has been argued that the increased connectivity and decreased cost of production and distribution has made it possible for artists to create a substantial income from just *1,000 true fans* (Kelly Kevin 2008). Although Kelly has met some critique for his claims (Page 2008), it highlights the fact that some music fans are willing to spend more than just the price of a CD on experiences and products connected to their favorite artist. The challenge is to have offerings that meet the demands of fans spanning from the ones who merely stream the music via Spotify to the super-fans that travel to foreign cities to attend concerts and collect special edition releases, t-shirts and posters, and to contain all of these possibilities within a single artistic universe.

The transmedia storytelling of Efterklang has two effects that potentially impact monetization of their music. On the one hand, it creates multiple entrance points to the artistic universe. It is possible to discover the band through hearing the music, seeing a film at a film festival, being invited over to your friend's house for a Private-Public Screening, hearing a radio montage about the creation of their album on NPR, by going to a concert, or discovering the visual universe of their music videos, or even by reading about their art work on graphic design blogs. On the other hand, it makes it possible to offer a variety of products for sale. Apart from music in both physical and digital formats, fans are offered different concert formats (6-piece band, trio and with symphony orchestras), official film screenings, DVDs, t-shirts and posters.

Furthermore, the transmedial approach affords opportunities to simultaneously tap into multiple revenue streams that are usually not available to niche musicians in popular music.

Economy

According to Stolberg, Efterklang's economy builds mainly on four pillars: Sales of recorded music, publishing, live, and support from the Danish Arts Foundation. In my interview with him, Stolberg did not disclose specific numbers, but he gave his overall account of how the different revenue sources supplement each other.

In terms of earnings, revenue from recorded music is the smallest of the pillars. This is not necessarily because there is no turnover from recorded music, but rather because the band invest considerable amounts into the recording and production of their music, which have to be recouped before the band can take home a profit. On the other hand, the recorded music is the backbone of the band's career as it is the appeal of the music that binds together all of the band's activities and gives the band a distinct artistic identity.

Turnover from touring is substantial, but so are the costs associated with being on the road, even though the band is conscious about how they spend money when touring. The core members of the band are supplemented with extra live musicians, a sound technician, and sometimes a light technician and a merchandise assistant (Rasmus' wife), but the total number of persons in the crew is adjusted to fit into a 9 person Mercedes Sprinter minivan to keep transportation costs down. Effectively what the band earns during a tour is enough for them to make a decent living while they do it, but not enough for them to save anything for the periods (e.g. when they write and record new music) where they are not on tour.

Compared to touring, publishing is a steadier, but also less significant, revenue source. Notably, Efterklang's early releases had the band credited collectively as authors (as it is often the case among bands), whereas the credits for the more recent albums (*Magic Chairs, Piramida*) reflect that Stolberg is not a composing member. This is arguably a contributing factor to Stolberg not denoting this revenue source as particularly significant.

The fourth pillar in Efterklang's economy, support from the Danish Arts Foundation, is on the other hand a significant contribution that is relatively unique. This support falls into two categories. One is a 3-year operating grant of 300,000 Danish Kroner a year, which is not tied to specific projects. This enables the band to invest into new productions without having to finance that through the earnings form previous projects. The other category is project funding, which they have recieved for several of

their productions (e.g. production support from the Danish Film Institute for the production of the documentaries). This kind of support is given under obligation to account for how the money is spent on production of music, so it doesn't directly function as income for the band members, but since both touring and recording music is a costly affair (especially when the latter includes a trip to a deserted mining town several hundred kilometers north of the coast of Norway), it makes it possible for Efterklang to realize ambitious artistic projects, that they would not have been able to realize without economic support.

9

Case 2: Jens Skov Thomsen and Veto

I first met Jens Skov Thomsen on his initiative. He was finishing a Master in Law with a dissertation about intellectual property law and performance rights, and contacted me to discuss some of my work on the economy of music streaming. At that time I had been thinking about choosing Thomsen's band Veto for one of my case studies, because they seemed to offer a complimentary perspective on the careers of Danish micro-pop musicians. Unlike some of the other bands on the Danish scene, Veto seemed to be less concerned with storytelling, but nevertheless came across as a band with a distinct profile. Additionally, they had gone from a small independent label to a major label in order to pursue an international career.

On the surface this seems like a traditional trajectory for a rock band that gradually achieves success through a combination of intensive touring and major label clout, but what makes Veto particularly interesting for a study of how digitalization affects conditions for artists is the alternative deals they negotiated with their label. This gives the opportunity to analyze the heterogeneity of contract practices that emerge in the digital music economy, as well as the rationales that have driven Veto in their idiosyncratic choices concerning their relationships to their labels. This aspect is further strengthened by Thomsen's ability (in part because of his professional training) to give a nuanced account of the motivations and considerations behind the band's decisions.

The analysis in this case focuses on the gradual professionalization of Veto as their career evolves. One central aspect of this is the development in the structural organization of the band from being four individuals running the band economy through their manager's company and getting a 'salary' from the manager, over a business partnership, to forming a limited liability company that controls the band's

recordings and rights. As a parallel theme, I will analyze how the changes in structural conditions, as well as changes in the band's career trajectory, affect the band's choices intersect with the band's two main motivations: control and financial security. I will be arguing that Veto is an exemplary case of what I call 'ad hoc entrepreneurs'. That Veto has gradually evolved as a small business. Not as a deliberate goal, but as a means to mediate the band's pursuit of control with their personal needs for financial stability.

Jens Skov Thomsen's musical career is centered on Veto. Although he occasionally plays with other bands, playing the bass in Veto is the only thing that he considers as integral to his professional career. In Thomsen's own words, Veto is a band that "most people know, and many people like, but who doesn't sell that many CDs" (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014). They have had reasonable success in terms of both commercial impact and critical acclaim. They are among the last generation of Danish rock bands that were able to sell a decent amount of CDs, and have received considerable airplay on the radio stations of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. In 2007 they won two Danish Music Awards (the Danish equivalent of a Grammy) for 'Best new Danish Act' and 'Best music video'[15].

When asked to identify what characterizes Veto as a band, Thomsen has a hard time defining it but he eventually identifies some of the things that he thinks characterizes them:

> That thing about us always writing the music together, that is probably what gives us some kind of coherent sound, which can be both good and bad. I think, at least in terms of songwriting, that it is something that characterizes us. [...] We listened a lot to the British rock scene when we started, and then suddenly we got hooked on the German minimal electro wave. And somehow we got that rock universe mixed into that German minimal electro sound. And then suddenly we started listening to a lot of film soundtracks and become more spherical in our sound. But it has always been a collective movement where some of us still liked that British rock, and others really liked the German, and then it ended up somewhere in between. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

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[15] http://www.ifpi.dk/?q=content/dma07-favoritsejre-og-overraskelser

A visual characteristic of Veto is the rare occurrence of traditional band photos in their visual artwork and music videos. Thomsen explains this as a consequence of the band's attempt to keep focus on the music. This does however not mean that the band tries to remain anonymous or construct a set of fictive characters. They still appear in band photos for magazine articles and give interviews (see e.g. Gonzalez 2012; Winther 2006), but Thomsen explains that they try to limit the amount of attention drawn to themselves as individuals and let the music function as the central narrative about Veto.

Organizational Principles

Veto's History of Professionalization and Organization

The history of Veto's way of organizing themselves as a band offers interesting insights into several aspects of becoming professional musicians for several reasons: They have made several transitions along the way. Releasing their first titles with a small Danish indie label, then moving on to an international major label as their artistic and commercial ambitions grew. Veto has gradually increased their level of professionalization of their internal organization – as well as their relations with external partners – along the way.

Veto's career spans over some crucial years in the development of the music business. They have been active during the crash of the CD based economy of recorded music, which was also the period when the contractual relationships between artists and labels changed. During this period, the artist's role as (involuntary) entrepreneur (Wikström 2013) became increasingly strengthened. Although there had previously been cases of artists taking responsibility for the commercial aspects of their careers, the extent to which artists (often in collaboration with their managers) took control.

> Rather than being contracted by a record company to perform certain services, the artist sets up a limited company and secures the necessary funding as he or she sees fit. [...] The value of the company is raised through the accumulation of revenues from various activities and the intellectual assets developed by the artist. (Wikström 2013, loc. 2310)

Veto presents a case of this development. But as Wikström hints vaguely to in using the term '(involuntary) entrepreneurs', the development of an entrepreneurial approach is rarely a goal in itself for musicians. The case of Veto presents an illustrative example of how this development evolves gradually as pragmatic responses to concrete challenges and ideologies. Although I acknowledge Wikström's conception of the increased importance of the role of the artist as entrepreneur, I disagree with the notion of this as an involuntary thing. As I will show in this case, Thomsen and his band mates take on this new role as an active and deliberate choice. Instead I use the term 'ad hoc entrepreneurs'. I have chosen this in order to account for the fact that this form of organization is not a result of strategic planning, but emerge as responses to specific situations.

This kind of ad hoc organization is present both in the division of tasks among band members, and it is central to the way the band has organized as a commercial entity. When I asked Thomsen how they had organized their band, he gave both an account of the principles of organization, but also of the process:

> It has been kind of a ongoing process. When we started ten years ago, we were just five individuals. Then we started playing concerts and ran that through our managers company. We then ended up getting a tax bill because we didn't keep track of the economy. So the second or third year we founded a partnership [I/S], which ran all our live activities. There isn't any VAT [moms] on concert fees and all that, so that was pretty easy. You know, we didn't have to register and all that. And we have had that ever since. At one point, when we were free of our obligation with our first record company, we decided to start our own production company – a limited liability company [ApS] – where we have made one of our records. And since then the limited liability company has been part of some of our agreements with labels. In the limited liability company, we have placed, first of all, some rights to recordings, but also all production activity. So we have placed all our merchandise and so on there. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

What Thomsen describes here is a good example of what Wikström conceptualizes as the artists' new roles as "(involuntary) entrepreneurs" (Wikström 2013, loc. 2307). The tasks undertaken by the band members resemble the ones we might associate with

entrepreneurs in other industries, but for Veto the objective was not to establish and build a business, but to play music. As they started to gain popularity and faced sanctions for not having a structured approach to the business side of their career they took measures to form a legal and economic partnership. But only later, when they made a more considerable investment in the band, did they form a limited liability company. In order to understand the nature of this development, it is necessary to analyze the motivations behind the band's collaborations with professional partners a various stages in their career.

For Veto, the collaboration with external partners started at a very early stage. After one of their first shows, a young emerging artist manager approached them. At that point the band didn't really see the need for a manager, but he took the train from Copenhagen to Aarhus to visit the band in their rehearsal space and persuaded them that it was worth giving it a try. For Thomsen and his bandmates the decision was based on the sense that the young manager showed exceptional dedication in persuading them. For the first two years the collaboration between the band and the manager was without a formal contract, and based on a gentleman's agreement that the manager got a share of the earnings equal to the band members (one sixth).

In Thomsen's description, the relationship between the band and the manager is both an incidental thing – they didn't actively seek a manager – and based on trust and gut feeling more than on strategic considerations. It is the sense of his commitment to the band and their music that persuades them to enter into the partnership.

The relationship with the manager also became a key factor when the band signed their first record contract (for the release of the EP *I Will Not Listen*, 2005) with the tiny independent label Tabu Records, which was at that point had only released records with the hardcore hip hop band Suspekt. Although the musical fit between alternative electronic rock and hardcore hip hop is not the most obvious, the personal relations between the manager and one of the co-founders of Tabu (they were both among the six first students enrolled in the music management program at the Rhythmic Music Conservatory) promised Veto the opportunity to produce the music without interference from the label.

> We were very keen on wanting to have a unique sound, and not having anybody tell us what to do, and all that. Our name [Veto] also hints at that, right? [...] Tabu was created from the same idea. They [Tabu

Records was founded by members of the Danish hardcore rap band Suspekt] had a hard time getting signed with that weird violence rap they were making. Nobody wanted to release that, so they made their own label. And just before, I talked about A&Rs taking bands in and developing them. These guys were very open. I mean, they produced hip-hop. So their attitude was like 'we don't kow how to make rock, so you control that yourselves'. I remember that that was quite uncommon at that time. There wasn't nearly as much do-it-yourself at that time. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

The deal with Tabu Records was what Thomsen refers to as "an old-school royalty deal" (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014). This means that the label financed recording, production and promotion of the album. For a band like Veto that was still unknown at the time, signing with a bigger label would probably have made it impossible to uphold the kind of artistic autonomy that they were granted at Tabu. But in economic terms they arguably didn't get a better share of revenue from sales than they would have been able to negotiate elsewhere. But as Thomsen explains, the situation was another at that time – both in terms of the band's career, and in terms of the structure of the music economy. It was Veto's first release and the band was able to produce most of it themselves, so production was relatively inexpensive. Veto then handed over everything to the record company who took care of the rest. The release ended up selling around 30.000 CDs. In Thomsen's view, a great deal of this success could be attributed to hard work from the record label. He never the less feels that the release ended up being a better deal for the record company than for Veto, but also reckons that this was probably just the way most contracts worked at that time.

After having released two records on Tabu Records, Veto decided that they wanted to move on. But in this case, their first move was not to contact another label. Instead they formed a limited liability company in order to record and produce their third album on their on own hand.

Tabu really wanted to make one more record, but we felt that we had to move on. We had tried clearing some things, for instance, for some movies, and we found out that half of that money went to our label. And a lot of producer's royalties went that way too. So we realized that we

missed out on a lot of revenue, and then we ended up talking with our manager about starting this limited liability company for making our record. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

There were several motivations for choosing the company construction. One factor was the ability to get a larger share of revenue instead of a relatively low royalty rate. Another factor has more to do with the motivational force in doing it on their own hand:

> We had this idea that we could produce a master recording and then shop it around to labels. Then we could get an advance payment from a label and release it on a distribution deal instead. That way, we could retain a lot of rights and we could decide for ourselves who we wanted to work with. The only thing was that we had to make the master recording, and we needed to finance it. But we also had some pioneer spirit. We really wanted something new to happen. We wnted to be masters of our own house and have control. There can be a cool synergy effect when you make a record for a label, but when you make a record for yourselves and have to shop it around afterwards, it ignites a whole other kind of fire. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

When establishing the limited liability company, they also made their manager co-owner. In a sense, this can be seen as a formalized version of the way the partnership had worked until then. Instead of receiving a cut of the band's revenue, he now owned a equal share of the band's company. But on further scrutiny, the construction also has the function of making the manager invest in the company. This way Thomsen and his band mates tied the manager even closer to the band by firmly aligning their interests. The band members later bought back the manager's share of the company.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the limited liability company was a way of shifting risk away from the individual band members. As Veto were about to produce a record at their own expense, they needed a way of securing their personal finances if the record would fail. They wanted to record the songs in PUK Recording Studios[16],

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[16] The studios have a client list that includes Elton John, George Michael, Depeche Mode, along with an impressive list of Danish and international artists. http://www.pukstudio.com

which is arguably the most prestigioius (and most expensive) in Denmark, and they went there on a bank credit. When the record was then finished, they signed a contract with Sony Music Denmark that gave them an advance, which they then used to pay off their personal loans.

The interesting thing is that the thoughts on leaving a small independent label are somewhat contradictory. On the one hand Thomsen talks about taking matters into their own hands and investing their own money as a way of increasing the band's motivation for the task. On the other hand they simultaneously seek to limit the risk by forming a limited liability company. The move from an independent to a major label might also instinctively appear to contradict with Thomsen's initial claim that Veto is characterized by a striving for control and integrity – virtues that would usually be associated with independent labels rather than multinational conglomerates. This is where the Veto's model with forming a production company becomes an interesting mediator between artistic control and economic stability. One primary motivation for Veto is closely related to the development of the band's career as well as the life situation of the band members:

> Ten years ago, I was 21 years old. That was when we released out first record. Today I am 31, and a lot has happened in those years. People have started families and all that. So it was also just an assessment that if we had to keep on working hard and spending so much time on this band, then we had to have some kind of investor. […] and we talked a lot about it because we were so keen on being masters in our own house and all that. […] We found out that if we were to do all the things we wanted, then we also needed an investor, and that was how we looked at the record company. And obviously, it was an investor that was also part of the music business, so they were able to bring something to the table, other than just money. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

Perceiving the label as an investor in this way seems to indicate an entrepreneurial mindset and as such also an empowerment of the band: being able to draw on the power of a major label without giving up creative control. But although this is arguably true, the freedom still comes with a price. In Veto's case, the tradeoff is a share of other revenue sources in what Thomsen calls a 360 deal. As Meier and Stahl (Stahl & Meier 2012) points out, this can be seen as an expanded reach of the label's

contractual power over the band. So what are Veto's motivations for submitting to this, when they have already recorded the music, and could easily release it independently, thereby retaining the rights and securing a higher share of the eventual revenue from sales, concerts, publishing, etc.?

> From the time when we said 'let's do it ourselves' to when we said 'let's try a 360 deal' you could say that we had higher international ambitions and we could use Sony's network for that. And they were ready to work hard for us, but we also sensed that they wanted something in return for that, which is obvious. If you don't give them anything – if you're too hard in the negotiations – then you might just end up with a good deal but where they don't want to put in the effort. So we were aware that we had to throw something in the pot if we wanted them to really put pressure on it and get their sister companies to release this. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

The logic that drives this is the insight that merely releasing an album through a major label is not in itself going to make a significant difference for that band's ability to attract a larger audience, or to expand their fan base in international markets. By giving the label a share of other revenue sources, Veto arguably aligns the interests of the band with the interests of the label to an extent where they seek to increase the label's motivation for giving their music a high priority and utilizing the label's network.

In relation to the band's international ambitions, the model also gave the band an interesting advantage. Because the band had recorded the album on their own, they also owned the master recordings, and this gave them the freedom to release the album through other labels in territories where Sony was reluctant or the band felt that others would do a better job. In this senses, not only the label, but also the band's management became central to moving into international markets. An international major label can have significant leverage through their sister companies in other countries. But if the Danish label office is also restricted in that they can only distribute through these sister companies, and only few Danish releases can hope of getting the priority in other territories. By entering a 360 contract, Veto hoped to be able to make it more attractive for Sony Music Denmark to promote their album to their international colleagues, as Sony Music Denmark would potentially earn a share

of not only music sales, but also a share of live revenue. The logic here is that giving the label a share of live revenue might lead to a stronger effort to build promote the band, and thereby lead to a bigger income for the band even if their share of the total revenue was smaller. As an additional measure Thomsen explained to me that Veto retained ownership of the master recordings. This gave them the opportunity to seek out partnerships with other labels in other countries, even though they had licensed the record to Sony in Scandinavia. In this way they were able to get their music out even if their label were not able to persuade their local collaborators to work on a new Veto album.

The last factor in choosing which label to work with is personal chemistry. Even though most people might have a tendency to post-rationalize some of the decisions, the gut feeling also came into play for Veto when they decided that Sony was the label they wanted to work with.

> When we were out shopping this record, we went to all the labels, and we just connected really well with Henrik Daldorph [Managing Director of Sony Music Denmark]. We could feel that he was a fan and that he was really ready to commit, which is really important. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

In sum, the story of Veto's career trajectory can be understood as a moderation of two complimentary themes in cultural work that are often presented in opposition to each other.

One theme centers on the growing ambitions as the band matures both professionally (in the sense that they establish a professional career and a loyal audience) and personally (in the sense that they grow older and get responsibilities towards children and spouses). This desire for both growing their audience and still securing a sense of economic stability leads them to abandon their starting point on a small indie label and instead seek out a 360 deal with a major label.

The other theme centers on how the notion of control has been central for Veto in key decisions of their career. As the band's success has grown, this has led them gradually to taking a more entrepreneurial approach to their professional organization, moving from a traditional recording contract early in their career to a model where take more

control, as well as the accompanying risk, of some activities – most notably recording and producing their music.

The interesting thing here is that the solution to these opposing themes has been the same. They have increased the level of entrepreneurial professionalization internally in the band by forming a limited liability company and letting this be the locus of their production activites. This way they claim autonomy in the creative phase, while still getting economic stability and drawing on the power of an international major label in the phase where the music is introduced to the market. In this sense, the entrepreneurial approach has been a way of bridging the gap between the ideology of 'l'art pour l'art' that underpins much of the valuation within the rock culture, while still drawing on the economic power of an international major label.

For Veto this has not been a planned development with a specific end-goal, but has rather been a series of ad hoc solutions to needs that have come up along the way, often based as much on moral and relational considerations as on rational commercial deliberations.

Division of tasks

In terms of the internal organization in the band, Thomsen gives a remarkably clear account of how the bandmates have divided the multitude of task that have to be performed as part of their professional career:

> In a purely organizational sense, internally in the band, we are all part of the songwriting process. It is a collective process. We always write together. Apart from that, we have tried to find out – or actually, it has come about by itself. For example, I take care of all the deals and all the economy, all the business. And then we have our keyboard guy, who is also part electric engineer, who takes care of all the technical stuff. And also about registrations. So if we're going to Switzerland, he is the one telling them what kind of equipment we bring into the country and all that. Then we have our lead singer, who is also a producer. So apart from writing the melodies and the lyrics, he also produces our records. [...] Then we have our drummer [thinks for a long time, them laughs]. No, I think you always have someone who is a bit of a freewheeler, but he is

also very committed, for instance, when Troels is mixing. Then he is there on the side, just like our guitarist is always by my side. If there is something I have doubts about, or if there is something I need to discuss, I always call him. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

It is worth noting how the individual band members have responsibilities of aspects that align more or less with their personal competencies, thereby ensuring that they can keep expenditure to external partners at a minimum by doing as much as possible themselves. But more importantly, Thomsen's account also reveals that this form of organization has not been a conscious strategic move, but rather the outcome of an ad hoc process. Thomsen offers a good example of the nature of this process. Parallel to his music career, he has completed a degree in law, specializing in intellectual property. In this way he has been able to strengthen the competencies that made him responsible for contracts and economy in the first place.

Media Texts

In terms of media presence, Veto comes across as a band that is quite reserved. Although one finds traditional band photos accompanying interviews and articles in print and online magazines, the band members have sought to focus the attention of the audience on the music rather than on the band.

Actually, we have always *not* focused particularly much on us as a band. Instead, we have focused really much on our songs – our music. We have never ever… well there was a picture one time, on the first album, but apart from that, we have never ever been on the front of a cover for instance. And we have almost never been on our posters either. And on our t-shirts we have found out that the ones that sell are the ones that just say 'VETO', so that is what we make. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

This represents a markedly different approach than the one taken by Efterklang. Thomsen and his band mates deliberately seek to keep out of the process of producing media texts. Both in the sense that they delegate the tasks to professional partners, but

also in the sense that they actively choose not to be central characters in the media texts surrounding their music.

Another aspect that characterizes Veto's production of media texts is their choice of format. Throughout their career they have been alternating between releasing EP's and albums. They started out releasing the EP *I Will Not Listen* (2005) and followed it up with the album *There's A Beat In All Machines* (2006) on Tabu Records before changing to Sony and releasing first the two albums *Crushing Digits* (2008) and *Everything Is Amplified* (2011) before returning to the EP format again with their most recent releases *Sinus* (2012) and *Point Break* (2013). Although the practice of using an EP to test the market for a band's first release is common, Veto's return to the EP format on their later releases is less conventional. For Veto it was the shift to digital distribution that opened the door to experimenting with the format. In an interview with the music magazine Gaffa, Thomsen said that:

> It is a break with the format and we have tried to adapt our way of releasing the music to the way we work. We actually like the term 'release' better than 'EP' because even that is a particular format, and what we do could as well have been two tracks, or 12 tracks for that matter. If we had had 12 tracks where we had this sense of the material, then we would have released it. As the CD loses importance, then the whole album format is no longer a frame that you have to fit your creative process into anymore. Instead of having to follow up with five new tracks after you have finished some songs you are satisfied with, before you can release them, now we can just say stop when the process is over, and release what we have made, immediately. [...] There is this saying in the record industry that you only need three or four good singles and then just a soft bed of shit, and then you have an album. And I actually think that people from certain genres have had that approach. And then it's no wonder that people only chose to listen to the singles these days. Once you could trick people into buying the whole record for 100 kroner with only a few good songs. (Gonzalez 2012) [translated from Danish by this author]

So on one hand digital formats paved the way for breaking the mold of the album format that a rock oriented band like Veto would usually have been expected to fit into, and simultaneously align their output better with the changing listening patterns

of their fans. But as a band with international ambitions, these experiments were not only positive:

> It gave us some challenges to try to change format in the middle of everything [...] Our label, Sony Denmark, have been very open to those kind of things, but it has given a whole lot of complications. For example when you get an email back from Sony in Germany that says that it is not a record, and that they can't work with it before we make an album. [...] That's when we have sometimes doubted if we should keep on insisting that we want to release our music this way because that was what we intended, or if we should adapt to different markets. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

The issue here is that although the German market, as the arguably most significant export market for Veto, has significantly different characteristics than the Danish. In this case, the shift to digital distribution in Denmark has not been parallel in Germany, where 70% of revenue still comes from sales of CDs (Bundesverband Musikindustrie 2014).

Media Strategies

As can be sensed in the paragraphs above, Veto's media presence is quite modest. Compared to a band like Efterklang, they only use few media channels, and their communications through these channels are varying in intensity.

Veto's digital media presence is centered on their Facebook band page[17] (45,000 page likes). Their previous website (www.vetonet.dk) is now redirected to the band page, and this is also the place where most of their activity as a band takes place. In addition to this they have a Twitter account[18] with 3,400 followers, as well as Youtube[19] and Vimeo[20] channels that are primarily used to host music videos, and a Soundcloud profile[21] that hosts other bands' and artists' remixes or reworks of Veto's music. In

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[17] https://www.facebook.com/vetodk
[18] https://twitter.com/veto_dk
[19] https://www.youtube.com/user/voteveto
[20] https://vimeo.com/veto
[21] https://soundcloud.com/veto-dk

addition to this, Veto has a webshop[22] with CDs, vinyls and merchandise, which is operated by their record label.

As mentioned in the section about the organization of the band, Veto operates with a differentiation of task between the band members. As a part of this division, Veto's social media channels are primarily the domain of the band's lead singer and their guitarist. The band regularly discusses how to optimize their communication, but they have not defined a strategy for their use of media. Thomsen nevertheless feels that the fact that only two of the members update and engage in online conversations still gives the band a distinct voice.

> [...] it is more that certain people in the band, who are good at it, do it. And get it done right, and in a good way. In that sense, we have pretty good confidence in each other. There is really no strategy behind it, it is simply just involvement: 'Here we are, sitting in some house in Sweden – out in the wilderness – and we are making a new song. It is eleven in the night and we have just hit the right chorus. We want you to be a part of that. Look forward to hearing the rest of the song'. And that has worked pretty well. I mean, we get a lot of response on that. (Jens Skov Thomsen, personal interview, 29. September 2014) [translated from Danish by this author]

In general Veto's usage of social media is characterized by this kind of motivations. They try to involve their fans when they feel they have something that might interest them, but can also be absent for longer periods, especially during periods where the band is not active on tours or recording. In 2014 they only made five posts to their Facebook page and tweeted once. Apart from a single Facebook post celebrating the band's 10-year anniversary, all of these posts were photos from recording/rehearsing sessions, hinting at the band being at work on new material.

The thought behind this approach has been to involve fans in small behind the stage scenes – showing them bits of the process behind what they hear at concerts or on records. In line with the general effort of Veto to focus the audience's attention on the music and the band as a collective rather than on the band members as individuals, their communication is rarely about anything other than music. Notably they have discussed to hold back on process updates in connection with their upcoming new

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[22] http://veto.sonymusicshop.dk

album because they want to strengthen the sense of novelty for their fans when they release the new material. This runs counter both to practices among some of the other bands analyzed in this dissertation, and to advice commonly given in handbooks for musicians (e.g. Ibsen, Ardahl, & Ebbesen, 2013). But for Veto this becomes a way to assert their identity as an almost anonymous band, as well as position them in relation to the pre-internet era of rock music where there was arguably a greater sense of musicians as unreachable and air of mystery around the record production process. To some extent Veto draw on the same effect when they (after some discussion) chose not to sign their posts on social media with the name of the band member, but rather let it be a statement from the band as a collective.

The only aspect that breaks away from the general tendency towards keeping a strict focus on Veto's own music in their communication is the practice of remixing. As mentioned earlier, Veto's Soundcloud profile is dedicated to other artists' remixes and reworks of Veto's songs. Though this might arguably be a break from the general tendency to have only a minimal online presence as well as a contradiction to Thomsen's assertion of the band as control freaks. Letting other people remix your music might be indeed be conceived as something that requires the band to let go of the control. But on the other hand, it aligns neatly with Veto's lead singer and producer Troels Abrahamsen's side projects where he regularly have been remixing other artists. In this way, the remixes are products of an exchange of favors that can be used as a way to produce unique content that can be employed in a variety of ways. For example they had Danish colleague James Braun (Martin Høgild) remix some of the tracks from the album *Crushing Digits* (2008), which was released as a limited edition EP that was given for free to the audience at a concert in their hometown Aarhus.

Business Models

Economy

Veto's economy is based on four main sources. Sales of recorded music, live, performance rights, and synchronization/licensing. Of these four Thomsen estimate that live and performance rights account for far most of the income generated for the band.

The role of music sales has drastically changed during the years Veto have been active. When released their first EP and LP in 2005 and 2006, CD sales were still a significant economy for a band like Veto. Selling 30,000 copies, of the debut album, which was produced on a tight budget, made it possible to make some money from sales. But as the music business moved from CDs over digital downloads to streaming, Veto's income from music sales has gradually decreased. For Thomsen this means that the role of the recording has shifted over the decade he has been a professional musician:

> One of the most important things that has happened is that the recording has gotten a totally different role. It is no longer a commodity in itself in the same way. Now it is something that is consumed, and something that is performed.

What Thomsen hints to is not only the fact that they make less money from sales, but also that the role of the recording has changed at a more fundamental level. The dwindling sales do not mean that the recording has become obsolete as a source of economic value for the band, but rather that the band makes economic profit from the recording in new ways. Performance rights as well as what is sometimes referred to by industry actors as 'new biz' (synchronization, licensing and brand partnerships) represent such alternative revenue sources that have become increasingly important for Veto over recent years.

The increased importance of performance rights is in line with the general shift in industry revenue on the Danish market outlined in chapter 6 that has been borne by an increase in revenue from an increasing number of media channels. The increased importance of synchronization, licensing and brand partnerships is in line with a more novel focus on these revenue sources from the industry, which has been seen as a means to cover some of the lost revenue from music sales. This can be an unreliable source of income for a band like Veto because one or two successful deals can significantly change the income for the year. One example of this is when Veto entered into a partnership with the Danish brewery Royal Unibrew to be part of their *Tak Rock!* (Thank You Rock!) campaign, which was a high profile campaign across billboards and national television. Thomsen estimates that this partnership accounted for about half of the band's income that year.

Merchandise sales is also an important source of income for Veto. As a category, merchandise falls somewhere between live and alternative revenue sources. In

industry understanding it is often talked out in connection with 'new biz', but Thomsen mentions it in connection with live revenue. He told me that on a German tour Veto earns more on merchandise than they get in fees from playing. This statement is arguably skewed by the fact that the band's expenses are set off against the fees from the venue, but merchandise sales is nevertheless important for the band, as it becomes a way to make a decent wage when touring outside their Danish home market where they are able to demand higher fees because they are more well-known to the local audiences.

Apart from this Veto has previously (2008-2010) been granted support from the Danish Arts Foundation, as part of the program *Den unge elite* (The Young Elite), which supports young talent with a three year stipend based among others on the development and pursuit of an ambitious career plan.

An important point about Veto and Thomsen's economy is that there is a development in the relationship between different income sources, which is related to general structural changes in the music business as well as to the development in the band's career. Veto has first hand experience of the changing role of recorded music from being the heart of the music economy to being something that is primarily (at least in economic terms) a means for generating a profit by generating attention that the band can convert to live revenue, and by exploiting the rights to the music through public performance, brand partnerships, or synchronization. Although live revenue remains a central source of income throughout Veto's career, the changing relation between income sources has on the one hand become a driver for the band's choice to establish a limited liability company in order to control these rights. On the other hand, this construction has had led to a shift of economic risk to the band, and the effort to reduce this risk and secure a minimum of financial security has led them to share some of these rights with a label in return of financial investment. In the end, this form of relation is an advantage to the band if they are successful, but they also take a greater risk if their music is less successful. This factor, as well as the level of initial investment needed to start the company and finance the recording of the album, means that this type of construction is primarily an advantage for a band that has already build a fan base and therefore both have the money to invest in the initial production, and the bargaining power to negotiate a fair deal with the label.

Organizing and Communicating in Response to Digitalization

What characterizes this case is the way the changing conditions related to digitalization and the career trajectory of the band; both have had profound impact on the way Veto has chosen to organize. As a band that is partly a product of the pre-digital music business, Veto has continually adapted their practices to new media forms, as well as new industry structures. As can be seen in the previous sections, they have changed the organization of the band in very manifest ways through forming first a partnership, and later a limited liability company. They have gone from a traditional royalty deal with a small independent label to a licensing deal with a major label, taking control of the rights to their own music, while relying on the label for financial security. And they have embraced the opportunities that digital formats offer by releasing EP's with a shorter frequency, rather than albums. What hasn't changed much is the band's communication with their fans. Although they use social media, they do it infrequently and in a way that closely resembles the reserved and controlled type of communication that traditionally took place through print and broadcast media. In that sense, they don't take advantage of social media's potential for dialogue and informal communication. The reason for this arguably lies in the personalities of the band members. As mentioned earlier, the band has made a deliberate choice to try not to draw attention to themselves as individuals or as band, and instead let the music speak for itself. This approach also carries over to the band's online communication. As described in chapter 5 communication in social media often takes the form of celebrity and involves relationship building through continuous communication and self-presentation (Baym 2012; Marwick & boyd 2011) . But Veto's choice to push the music, rather than their own personas, to the front undermines their ability to perform this kind of communication.

In this sense, Veto's adaption to digitalization has been primarily in an organizational and economic manner, and these two aspects are highly interconnected. They formed a partnership as a way to get better insight into their personal economies. They formed a limited liability company as a way to realize their artistic aspirations, but also as a way to get control of their intellectual property rights. They gave their manager an ownership share in the company in order to increase his incentives in working with the band, but also letting him take a part of the economic risk. And they chose to partner with a major label in order to pursue their ambition of an international career, while simultaneously getting economic security. What characterizes all of these choices is the ad hoc approach. Through Thomsen's accounts it is clear that although each of the

steps are carefully considered and based on reflexive choices, they are not part of a larger organizational strategy of professionalization.

10

Introduction to the Boston Music Scene

The first two cases were based in Copenhagen. The next two cases are part of the music scene in Boston. Although these musicians and scenes share considerable parts of their framework conditions – especially in the sense that they are connected to the same transnational media culture – there are also significant local variations in the culture and organization of the music scenes. Before proceeding to the actual analyses, I will therefore give a brief account of the music scene in Boston.

Boston has a very lively supply of music venues and concerts. The city's status as a major college city, boasting two of the world's leading universities, Harvard and MIT, some of the most renowned music conservatories (Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory, and Boston Conservatory), as well as a host of other colleges, supports a wide variety of music venues, covering different genres and capacities. On the other hand, Boston doesn't seem to have its own distinct local music scene. When I first arrived in Boston, and started asking questions about the local music scene to local scholars and industry professionals, they were generally hard pressed to define such scene. It seemed that even though there was a lot of music in the city, there was also a lack of coherence among the artists. Particularly interesting was the absence of a middle-layer of professional musicians.

The reasons for this are multiple. But two framework conditions are worth noting in this introduction. First, Boston might be the regional hub of music in Massachusetts, but just like the alternative scenes in Copenhagen orient themselves towards transnational genre communities, the music alternative scenes in Boston remain peripheral to particularly New York. And although the frame of reference might be more national than transnational, the dynamic remains the same. For local Boston musicians trying to build a career, it is crucial to connect to a regional or national

scene in order to create a sustainable career. Hartmann (2012) has argued that developing and maintaining social capital that could lead to better-paying gigs was a primary focus of music scene participants in Boston. In this line of thinking, a pursuit of a career in music might therefore lead musicians to focus their networking activities on music industry hubs like New York, Los Angeles, or Nashville.

Second, with Boston's position as a college city with elite universities, as well as a thriving economy that has recovered fast from the recession in the 2000's, the cost of living has increased dramatically (Bluestone et al. 2015). Such a development can have substantial effect on emerging artists' ability to sustain a living. High rent alone have been showed to drive musicians to relocate to cities with lower living costs, even if they have less active music scenes (Grazian 2013). In addition to this, as Fabian Holt has argued, gentrification can have significant implications on a city's music scenes, and lead to musicians moving to areas with more affordable housing (Holt 2013). Holt uses the emergence of the concert promotion and venue management corporation Bowery Presents as an exemplary case of how gentrification and the emergence of mid-size music clubs in New York City has contributed to a social, economic, and cultural process that affects popular music culture. Notably, Bowery Presents is originally NYC based, but is now also a central actor on the Boston music scene. They operate the venues *Royale, The Sinclair,* and *Great Scott,* and promote some shows on other venues including The *Middle East* and *TT The Bears*[23]. For a period, they were also promoters of the annual music festival *Boston Calling*. Crossroads Presents[24], which is another similar company (albeit Boston based) that promotes concerts at venues like *House of Blues, Brighton Music Hall* and *Paradise Rock Club*. Where Bowery is connected to the network within the indie rock industry (Holt 2014), Crossroads has ties to the major entertainment promoter Live Nation[25].

Reflective of the situation outlined above, none of the two informants treated in this chapter live in Boston. Although industry professionals and musicians considered them as part of the Boston scene, they did not actually live permanently in the city. Brian Barthelmes lives and occasionally works part-time on an alpaca farm in Vermont, but is nevertheless front man in the Boston based band Tallahassee. Ellis Paul first came to Boston as a student at Boston College, and even though he now lives

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[23] http://www.boweryboston.com
[24] http://crossroadspresents.com
[25] http://www.vanyaland.com/2013/05/01/crossroads-presents-unveils-new-homepage-websites-for-the-paradise-rock-club-brighton-music-hall-and-orpheum-theatre/

in Charlottesville, VA, he is considered a part of the Boston folk rock scene to a degree where he has won no less than 15 Boston Music Awards (which requires its nominees to be closely tied to the city's music scene[26]) since his career took flight in the beginning of the 1990's.

This also means that the music scene in Boston is defined more by the venues and the music being played there, than the musicians who actually live in the city. One consequence is that community based scenes are not as central as they are in Copenhagen. Another consequence is that the ownership and organization of venues connects them to larger national networks rather than to a local network. This is in stark contrast to the norm in Copenhagen, where the publicly subsidized and the community-based venues are active in promoting local artists. For the publicly subsidized venues this is because they have a contractual obligation to do so. For the community venues it is because they have strong personal ties to those musicians.

A few influential local media outlets, that compliment the national media outlets, characterize the media landscape in Boston. The daily newspapers The Boston Globe (broadsheet) and The Boston Herald (tabloid) offer some coverage of the local music scene online and on print. The local radio station WBCN used to be a hub for the Boston rock scene, but it has been closed since 2009 (Alan 2013). Commercial stations with contemporary hit music formats now dominate the radio landscape in Boston. The two largest stations (WXKS[27] and WJMN[28])[29] are both owned by iHeartMedia (formerly Clear Channel). In addition to this, the Boston music scene is covered by a few print and online magazines such as Vanyaland[30] and Performer Magazine[31]. However, the general picture is that local professional musicians get only limited coverage in these outlets. Compared to Copenhagen, where there is a culture of co-existence between local and non-local artists in the media, Boston is characterized by an absence of national and linguistic barriers, as well as a commercial inclination and absence of political obligation to promoting local music among local media companies, that leaves local artists with a very modest privilege in the media of their home town.

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[26] http://www.bostonmusicawards.com/about
[27] http://www.kiss108.com/
[28] http://www.jamn945.com/
[29] http://www.cision.com/us/2012/10/top-10-radio-stations-in-boston/
[30] http://www.vanyaland.com
[31] http://performermag.com/

There is, however, an active amateur scene in the city, which is partly tied to the population of students from Berklee College of Music. Two local radio stations, WZLX Boston Emissions and WAAF's Bay State rock, cover this scene. Both are weekly late-night shows that focus on the local Boston music communities and promote local shows. Additionally, this scene has a larger sense of community. The Model Café, a bar in the Allston neighborhood for instance hosts a monthly rock'n'roll social that focuses on network building in this community.

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Case 3: Brian Barthelmes, Forts/Gainesville
and Tallahassee

I first met Brian Barthelmes at a show at The Great Scott, a 240 capacity bar venue in the Allston neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. Barthelmes was opening with his band Forts/Gainesville for Lee Bains And The Glory Fires, a national touring act from Alabama with a recent release on the acclaimed indie label Sub Pop. The audience is captivated by Forts/Gainesville's music, and a significant part of the 50-70 people present seem to know the band. When the main act comes on, only about 20-30 people are left in the bar. After the concert I get into a conversation with Barthelmes, and it turns out that Forts/Gainesville is only a side project to Barthelmes' other band, Tallahassee. Both bands play what they call roots rock, a variety of vocal indie pop/rock with strong Americana influences.

Barthelmes comes across as an atypical character for an indie rock musician. Most eye-catching is his physical stature. The guitar looks incredibly small in the hands of the 6-foot-6 former professional American football lineman. Long wild hair and beard add to the impression of a beast, that seems paradoxical to the tight and mellow vocal harmonies coming from his mouth when he sings in his bands.

Barthelmes has been playing music professionally since he was dropped from the roster of New England Patriots in 2007. First as a part of the indie rock scene in Providence, Rhode Island, which has also fostered bands like The Low Anthem and Brown Bird. Later Barthelmes and some of his friends moved to Boston "out of financial necessity", as he says, following jobs and spouses. Building on a very open

personality and a keen sense of networking, Barthelmes has become a central figure on Boston's indie scene.

Two characteristics make Barthelmes particularly interesting for this dissertation. One is the degree of sociality that binds his artistic work together. He repeatedly refers to his closest musical colleagues as family, and other parts of his musical network as buddies and friends, and he actively strengthens and utilizes these relations in his life as a musician. The second is the fact that he has taken a relatively pure DIY approach to his career. His bands release their music on their own, and in contrast to the Danish bands that I interviewed, this is done without involving an established label to do distribution or marketing. In this chapter, I will focus on how these two aspects of Barthelmes' career play together and form the basis of his ability to make music his primary occupation.

At first impression, the theme of digitalization might seem relatively absent in this case. Compared to the other cases in this dissertation, Barthelmes neither has a particularly strong online presence (he actually, at one point, refers to himself as 'technologically retarded'), nor has he been through drastic changes in the way he has organized professionally. The first aspect makes him an exemplary case of the way online media converge with offline life for young artists to a degree where the distinction between the two seems forced. The second perspective points primarily to the fact that Barthelmes' career took off a bit later than in the other cases, which means that he has not experienced the shift away from a label-driven music economy. This does not imply that digitalization has not had an effect on Bartelmes' organizational or communicational practices. He just respresents a generation of artists for whom the new framework conditions are the only conditions they have experienced firsthand.

Friends and Families: The Importance of Personal Networks

Personal and professional networks play a central role in Barthelmes' pursuit of a professional career as a musician. In this chapter, I analyze first the nature of these networks, and secondly the role of social media in establishing and maintaining relationships. These two perspectives are closely related to each other. On one hand, social media transforms the nature of social relations. On the other hand, social media is appropriated to serve the reflexive purpose of building personal and professional

networks that are primarily bound to a specific scene that exists primarily outside social media. Although these perspectives are interrelated, I treat them separately in this analysis.

The role of social media in developing professional networks outside the bands' local region has considerable similarities to the one described by Mjøs (2012) in his study of the role of social media in Norwegian musicians' careers. The importance is primarily related to two affordances of social media. First, social media has made it easier to circumvent the traditional chain of communication between industry actors. Fans, promoters, and collaborators have a more direct access to the musicians, which enables a less formal line of communication (Mjøs 2012, p. 93). Secondly, social media serve to nourish a differentiation of the notion of a scene. Drawing on Bennet and Peterson's differentiation between *local*, *translocal,* and *virtual scenes,* Mjøs shows how Norwegian musicians relate to all of these levels in overlapping ways, and argues that social media have "[...] been used to Initiate and cultivate contact with either familiar or unfamiliar people locally or far away with common music interests (Mjøs 2012, p. 106). In the second part of this chapter, I will analyze how Barthelmes uses social media to translocal scenes in particular. His motivations for doing this are tied to the role of personal and professional networks in his pursuit of a sustainable career. I will therefore start the chapter with an analysis of the role of these networks in Barthelmes' career, both in terms of the nature of the relations, and in terms of the blurred line between friendships and market relations.

Barthelmes uses the term 'family' to reference both personal and professional relations. Though he definitely belongs to a new generation of artists that have been formed by social media and tend to have a much closer relationship with their fans, the relationships are arguably not really that of a family. In a related discussion about friendship between artists and fans in social media Baym argues:

> The positioning of audiences somewhere between unequal 'fans' and equal 'friends' is itself continuously negotiated through practice. On the face of it, there are many ways in which fan/artist relationships are fundamentally different from friendships. While friendships are by definition voluntary and equal (e.g. Wiseman, 1986), artists do not get to choose their fans, cannot choose to terminate that relationship, and the admiration is usually not mutual. Friendships also entail expectations

(e.g. Bigelow & La Gaipa, 1980; Fehr, 2004; Wiseman, 1986) that may
not hold in fan/artist connections. (Baym 2012, p. 289)

Instead she argues that "Fan/artist relationships might seem to be better understood as market relationships, given that artists are selling things audiences want" (Baym 2012, p. 290). Although Barthelmes has a very close relation to his audience – as illustrated by his friendliness with many of the audience members at the concerts I attended – and although he repeatedly tells me that he doesn't want to 'cram things into people's throats', he also talks about his ability to 'hustle' if he needs to sell more tickets to a show. The contradiction between these two aspects highlight that although he strives to treat his audience in a personal and genuine way (he is probably more equal to his fans that many other artists) – and although he arguably has an affinity to these other members of his personal and professional networks – these relationships are arguably not that of a family, for the same kind of reasons Baym uses to dismiss the idea of artist/fan relationships as real friendships.

Barthelmes' relationship to other musicians and to local venues is arguably more likely to be 'real' friendships. In these relations there is an element of equality and voluntarily. These relationships are forged through personal interaction, and are to larger degree based on shared taste, values and humor, as well as an expectation of mutual benefit from the relation.

The band Tallahassee is what Barthelmes calls 'the motherhub' of his musical practice. The band has four members, Matt Raskopf (drums), Scott Thompson (Lead guitar, vocals), Shawn Carney (bass), and Brian Barthelmes (guitar, lead vocals). In addition to this, he also plays in two other constellations that overlap with Tallahassee: Forts/Gainesville (together with Matt Raskopf and alternating bass players) and Dolly Nelson (together with Tallahassee's manager Dave Drago).

Tallahassee plays what they call 'roots rock', which is a blend of indie, classic rock, blues and Americana. Even though the band practically has been doing everything themselves, they have built a loyal audience in the Northeastern part of USA. As Barthelmes told me:

> In the past two years locally we've started doing well. So, if you've been
> over to Sinclair's [a 525 capacity venue in Cambridge, MA]? We've been
> able to pack that pretty well with Tallahassee. So when we do shows, we

> can draw usually about 200 people on a constant, and on big shows more.
> [...] that's in about four cities. Boston, Providence. In New York, about
> half that, and in Vermont, probably 130 or so. So there is a regional area
> where Tallahassee can do that. [...] What Tallahassee does is every month
> we're hitting all of those cities, and then we're playing with, and trading
> off shows with bands in Philly, bands in D.C., bands in the Midwest. And
> then every two or three months we usually take a loop all the way to the
> Midwest, back down to the South, and then back up here. (Brian
> Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

Barthelmes is the centre of rotation in his bands for two reasons. One is that he is both
the lead singer and principal songwriter. The other is that he is the one that takes care
of organizational matters in the bands.

In Barthelmes' view, social networking has been crucial to the way he and Tallahassee
have built their music career. As mentioned, the band sprung out of the indie scene in
Providence, Rhode Island, where Barthelmes and his band mates forged a lot of
friendships with other bands that would eventually serve them in building a career in a
network of cities in the Northeastern USA. When Barthelmes first moved to Boston, he
was surprised about the competitiveness of the music scene there. When trying to
book shows, he felt intimidated and frustrated by questions about how many people
they would be able to draw to a show. Rather than playing together with bands that
they liked, he felt that the business side was more dominant than he was used to from
Providence. Eventually he made some friends on the Boston scene, and they told him
about the concept of the 'road family'. The principle behind the road family is that
Barthelmes trades shows with friends in bands from other cities, so that Barthelmes
and one of his bands will support a band from Philadelphia or Washington D.C. in
order to help them bring out people to a show when they come to Boston, and maybe
even help them with accommodation. When Barthelmes then travels to Philadelphia
or Washington, he then expects his friends to return the favor.

So in one sense Barthelmes uses the term 'family' to refer to his friends and colleagues
from likeminded bands. But he also uses the term in relation to the local booking
agencies in Boston:

> We've come to see that within Boston there are two major booking
> families. There are the Bowery folks, who are Great Scott, they do a little

bit at T.T. [the Bears]'s, Sinclair, Royale, O'Brien's. And then there are the Crossroads people, who run Brighton Music Hall, Paradise, House of Blues [...]. We got close to them [Bowery] a couple of years ago. [...] I think Bowery uses us for a few reasons. One: it indicates to local people what that national band is. Two: if a national band is having a hard time following, they'll let us know, so when we take a show, Josh or some of the people there will always let us know 'Hey, don't worry about you guys hustling. This one's already got 600 tickets sold. Just come, do your job performing. Or they'll send us some messages 'Hey, not a whole lot of pre-sale tickets sold, can you hustle? And we've had a reputation, you know. I've got two posters in the window right now. We'll go hang posters in Newbury's storefront in the city. And so they know that if we put our minds to it, we can hustle up an extra anywhere from 70 to 200 people, if that's our intention. So I think for them there is both that comfort, and they know that we always do our job well. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

In a way, Barthelmes' conception of the family becomes a unifying label for the immediate professional network. As a concept it denotes not only the personal relations between people that like each other, but also the sense of mutual loyalty and reliance. There are no legal hindrances for Barthelmes to play for one of the competing promoters, but he has a sense of affiliation that limits him to only playing for one of the Bowery Presents venues when he plays in Boston. In return, they give him a steady flow of openings for other bands, which helps him build a network that he can utilize when touring other cities on the East Coast.

But the notion of family extends event further. Barthelmes also use the word to describe Tallahassee's manager and producer, Dave Drago. He first met Drago in 2008. Barthelmes and his band mates had an unfortunate experience with the engineer that was supposed to record their first album, and Drago stepped in with short notice and took over the role as producer on that album. A few weeks later, he phoned Barthelmes and told him that he thought they were very talented, but needed help with understanding the workings of the music industry. Drago started doing bookkeeping and management, and within a short period he was included as an equal part of the band in the sense that the band's contracts assigned the four members and the manager equal parts of the earnings. The division of work between Drago and the band is, however, blurred. On the one hand Drago not only takes care of management,

but also has a creative role as producer, and he has even occasionally filled in on bass in the absence of the regular bass player. In addition to this, he is the other half of Barthelmes' side project duo Dolly Nelson. On the other hand, Drago rarely accompanies the band on tours. Only on especially significant tours will he be present. Furthermore, because so many of Tallahassee's and Forts/Gainesville's shows come about as a consequence of Barthelmes' personal connections – to promoters as well as artists – Barthelmes still takes on considerable work in areas that would usually be considered the domain of a manager, like booking shows and reaching out to new professional partners.

Relying on personal networks to such a degree as Barthelmes does also imposes limitations on the ability to earn enough money to make a living. Neither of Barthelmes' bands have released their music on established record labels. This gives them the advantage that they can keep whatever they earn from selling CDs at shows, but it also means that they are to a large degree reliant on their own network to get gigs, and on the gigs to make an income. As a local act, this also implies that they need to be strategic in the not over saturating their local market. Barthelmes is very conscious about this:

> At this rate, in Boston, I'd say I'm comfortable holding two to four shows a month. And that's taken a lot of strategy - of knowing the city. So like, in Boston in particular, a lot of people in Jamaica Plain won't go to Somerville. And a lot of people in Somerville won't go to Jamaica Plain. And then a lot of people in Allston won't leave Allston. So if you play your cards right, you can play a JP show, but you don't hurt the people who are coming from Allston. And if you play a Somerville show, then they're not going to be there. But the good thing is that with the success we've had, we're still drawing a core crowd to all three parts of the city with a city-specific crowd to those parts of the city. And so within the city, I play about that much. Currently, playing shows altogether has ranged in among from about 15 to 18 shows in a month, to like eight shows in a month. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

Having such a strong local following, and working closely together local venues gives Barthelmes a base that both offers a minimum of financial stability that is both reliant on a loyal fan base, and instrumental to building it further. Barthelmes' close relation to his fans struck me as exceptional at the concerts I attended with his bands. He

seemed to have personal relations to a significant part of the audience, and he spent a great amount of time before and after his shows mingling with people in the bar. He later told me, that this is a deliberate decision. Hanging out with people and creating bonds to fans and colleagues is something he identifies as integral to his work as a musician.

One interesting aspect of the network that Barthelmes draws on in building his career, is that it is mostly based on relations with colleagues. Studies of musicians' entry into the music business are relatively few (Zwaan & ter Bogt 2009), and when they focus on the role of networks as a means of entry, these are primarily understood as organized professional networks within the recording industry (Cohen 1991; Jones 1997). The only place where Barthelmes draws on this type of industry network is in his relation to Bowery Presents, which is of a much more local nature. In this sense, Barthelmes' more personal and collegial approach has more in common with the transnational networks between musicians in Bergen and London identified by Mjøs (Mjøs 2012), although Barthelmes' network is based in a regional part of USA. Another feature shared with Mjøs' examples is the role of social media, which I will return to later in this chapter.

Having a blurred line between professional and personal networks, implied by Barthelmes' extended notion of family, has however also created problems. Barthelmes is married, and being part of his close family (although the two have no children), she sometimes requests him to keep a separation between the close family and everyone else.

> My wife often request that I don't invade on our personal life. Because she's not necessarily open in the same way that I am to letting people see everything. […] And a part of the reason why we moved to Vermont was that everybody knew I lived in Boston. Our house was a drop in center. You know, it would be 4 am and people would drop in the door to come crash the couch, because they knew they could. And that got to a point where my wife was like 'Brian, I love you, but I need to have you [alone]'. So we moved to Vermont. I'm very careful now about giving my address. I'll still find myself slip up and be like 'yeah, come crash any time', and then I hear my wife in the back of my head, and I'm like 'yeah, get a hold of me before you come up'. So privacy rights deal more with my ability to

not be open to anything because of how much I love people. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

Being A DIY Artist

Tallahassee is a striking contrast to the Danish bands I have analyzed previously. They their home market is spread over several states in the Northeastern USA, which means that their home territory is larger than that of Danish bands like Efterklang and Veto. But at the same time, they have a much more pure DIY approach to their work. None of the records that Barthelmes have produced with Tallahassee have been released on established record labels. It is not that they haven't had the opportunity. Barthelmes told me that several smaller independent labels had approached them over the years, but they have always felt that it was a better choice, both financially and legally, to do it on their own.

> Within Tallahassee, with the artists that we have, we can keep our own website. We have manager who also owns a studio. So we don't need help to pay for studio time. We don't need help with a booking agent, because we have someone in house. And then we have a lawyer that takes care of all our legal stuff and like getting songs into commercials and such. And so within the family we've never had a use for it. [...] I think, for us, the only reason we would take on a label would either be to get more exposure and connection to a bigger band circuit that we don't already know, or to get some money fronted for producing actual hard copies of the record. But at this point Tallahassee, for the past however many years, we've paid ourselves a small amount, and then a lot of the money we pour back in the band. So, you know, for all of the band's functioning we have a pot of like 15-20 thousand dollars. We have the money already to be able to produce the t-shirts, the CDs, to pay for travel, and to that degree, local labels, or labels that are only operating a small amount of things, isn't so much of a necessity. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

The effects of the choice of being DIY are both positive and negative. Barthelmes lists some of the most important upsides as being the ability to retain legal and financial rights to their music. As bands that rely on a regional circuit of live venues to make

their money, they have prioritized taking the full earnings from concert fees as well as sales of CDs and merchandise at concerts. Being on a label would mean giving a cut of these sources of income, and being only just able to make a living from their art, Barthelmes and his band mates can't afford to share the money with yet another entity. The decisive point has been that the bands already had small amounts of money to invest in recording records and producing CDs and t-shirts, which meant that they didn't need a record label to help them invest in these things that are vital to their economic sustainability.

But this choice also has its downsides. Most importantly, it limits the ability to grow from being primarily a regional band to being a national touring act. As Barthelmes and his band mates understand it, the primary reason for signing with a label would be to get access to an economic investment or professional network that is bigger than what they can provide on their own. Local independent labels don't have the economy or national networks to provide this. So as long as they don't have interest from larger labels, they assume that they can do better drawing on their 'family'. In this way, Barthelmes' reliance on personal relationships as a basis for his professional career is simultaneously the biggest asset at the current stage and an impediment to growing his career to the level that he aspires to. Being a family requires continuous communication and reaffirmation, which – even for a socially gifted person like Barthelmes – can only be kept up with a limited number of persons. Furthermore, the skepticism and competition among musicians (like the one Barthelmes encountered when he first moved to Boston) makes it hard to forge these relations without being continuously present in a particular local scene, although online communication has made it easier to maintain relations once the initial contact has been made.

Having a DIY approach, and building a career primarily on a regional live circuit has economic consequences for Barthelmes. He relies on music for only about one third of his income. Primarily concerts and CDs sold at concerts. But concerts also provide an important outlet for the visual art, which makes up the other part of his artistic work. As a visual artist, Barthelmes uses the merchandise table at venues to preview and sell his original drawings and paintings. He also does traditional art openings, but using concert venues as an alternative outlet for his art can earn him a significant supplementary income. However these two income sources are not always sufficient to provide a substantial economy, so in periods where the number of live concerts is low, Barthelmes does seasonal work as a warehouse operative, or similar unskilled labor.

Notably, Barthelmes also spreads his musical activities over several bands as a way to counter the fluctuations in the live market. This gives him an alternative source of income if for some reason the one band is out of business for a period, as it was the case with Tallahassee for a period when their guitarist was ill, and they had to cancel shows for several months. In such a situation, Barthelmes is hit hard because of the connection between his income from live shows and selling his art. When he is not playing shows, not only is he missing out on money from the show itself. He is also missing out on money from selling his art. Furthermore, it has the advantage of making it possible to stay relevant for venues of different sizes, and thereby expanding the number of possible shows:

> Tallahassee reached a place [...], especially in Boston and Providence, where we had to support bigger venues. So we couldn't do Great Scott so much any more because we were too big for it. But we had all these friends who were coming up and we wanted to play with. So we started Forts/Gainesville as a way to be able to play different things and support our friends coming through. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

In sum, two things characterize Barthelmes' career as a DIY artist: 1) A heavy reliance on a strong personal and professional network – his extended 'family' – both for touring, cultivating an audience, and creating a stable base of live gigs in and around Boston. 2) A deliberate strategic effort to have a variety of complimentary artistic outlets that are compatible in their aesthetic expressions but also cater to different situations and audiences. Thereby making it possible to combine several income sources into a sufficient financial foundation. 3) A combined ability within the bands to do most of the tasks associated with recording, booking, and creation of visual material such as posters and music videos, thereby making them less dependent on external partners.

Interestingly Barthelmes never mentioned creative autonomy to me as a motivation for taking a DIY approach, although he definitely adheres to the indie rock ethos of authenticity.

Media Strategies

Bands like Tallahassee cannot rely on any significant coverage from mainstream media. So for them, media strategies are solely directed at online channels. The biggest challenge for Barthelmes and his bands is to cut through the clutter and stand out. Although they have had some success with placing their music on blogs, as well as NPR and college radio, Barthelmes' bands generally have to fight to be taken serious, as they don't have traditional media to help set them off from amateur bands.

> For all of the good things about the Internet and its ability to be accessible, it has really oversaturated the market. You know, with Facebook, with Instagram, with Tumbler, everyone is getting an invite multiple times a day to an event. There are so many bands now […]. Yes, there is the good part, that we can all use the Internet. But there is the part now where people are like 'oh, you're in a band. Who gives a fuck? Who's not in a band?'. And to that degree it's been a hard thing, where I'm 'no, no, I'm serious about this. This is how I make my money. I'm going to do this for real'. But the Internet makes it so that it's hard to tell. […] The Internet has done a lot of things. One of the more difficult parts has been, like, this really blurred line. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

Though the Internet doesn't only hold opportunities, it still plays a central role in building a career. The bands draw on different channels for different purposes. Facebook is seen a central because that is where most people are, but Barthelmes perceives it more or less as an easy to operate website that holds information about the bands and their performances. They use it to post information about themselves, but the form is relatively distanced, and doesn't directly invite to interaction.

Barthelmes' three bands all have Facebook pages, which use an identical pattern. The pages posts are primarily either about upcoming performances, videos (snippets of smartphone concert videos, or music videos with a clear DIY aesthetic), or humorous pictures of the band – often either featuring Barthelmes' drawings or deliberately sloppily photoshopped pictures of band members faces on cheesy pop culture references. Judged on the way these bands communicate, as well as the nature of interaction from others, Facebook is the most fan-oriented of Barthelmes' online

media channels. He also has a personal Facebook profile with more than 1,700 friends, where he gets more personal. The same holds true for the three bands' presence on other social media like Twitter and Instagram. Here, there are significantly fewer followers, and judging from the profiles of the people who interact with the bands' posts, there is a higher share of colleagues that work with music.

In addition to these popular social media, Barthelmes and his bands use Youtube and Soundcloud primarily as ways to host music and video online. The most important feature of these services is the flexibility they offer in making it possible to embed content into other channels.

For Barthelmes, social media are crucial, not only to market his music, but also to maintain, build and keep in touch with his professional network. His view of social media as vital to the promotion of his artistic career translates into the level of reflection he has about different media channels and their offerings. Although he thinks of himself as 'technologically retarded', he has a relatively clear idea of how he wants to use different channels, and what he wants to communicate. These reflections are not explicitly formed into an actual communication strategy, but they become clear when he explains his thoughts about his online practices.

Barthelmes' use of media is something he does as an integral part of his business as a professional musician. He tells me that he feels that his social media presence adds to a storytelling about who he is. In this sense, what he does online is to market and brand himself as an artist, but in a way where he tries not to force it on his audience. He tries to display things like his aesthetic preferences, and his specific sense humor – in other words, aspects of his personality – and hopes that this constitutes a form of advertising for his art that doesn't come across as overly pushy.

Because he doesn't wants to be perceived as pushy, he has a skeptical approach to Facebook. He acknowledges that it is the channel that is most widely used, and therefore also a place where a band needs to be present. But he also feels that the architecture of how Facebook restricts how he can communicate with his fans and friends. He doesn't want to cram things down people's throats, so the practice of creating and inviting people through Facebook's Events module doesn't appeal to him. Instead, he treats it more like a website that is easy to maintain, and where people can find basic information about his bands – especially about their music, and where they are playing.

Being also a visual artist, Barthelmes feels more compelled by the offerings of Instagram where he is restricted to communicating through images. And although both his personal and band profiles here have considerably less followers than the respective Facebook profiles, he still thinks of Instagram as the most important:

> For me, personally as a musician and an artist, Instagram has been the biggest business thing I've ever done. So to my joking about being bad at booking and Internet, I don't have any business cards, I'm not a business card guy. [...] On my Instagram account, though, I post pictures of my paintings. I post pictures of the bands I play with. So we play with a band and they dig us, they start following my Instagram handle. So maybe they're down in Alabama, but they follow my random shit on here. So we go back and forth, communicating via pictures, and what both of us are doing are our own local scenes. So keeping communication that way. Now six months later I need to link up with some bands down there. Well I've seen all their friends. I know, literally, who they're playing with. [...] And suddenly our family has grown in that way. So the funniest outcome for me has been an accidental linking of likeminded people. (Brian Barthelmes, personal interview, 14. July 2014)

The above quote also shows that Barthelmes' media strategies are in line with the emphasis on personal and professional relations ('the family') outlined earlier in this chapter. Social media are not only a way of marketing the music and the live shows to new and existing audiences, but also crucial to maintaining and developing translocal personal and professional networks with peers that might turn out to be of use when booking or promoting live shows outside Barthelmes' home cities.

Barthelmes definitely employs social media to circumvent the traditional industry organization through self-releasing his music as well as to establish connections that give him access to playing shows in new venues based on his own connections rather than relying on the work of a booker. He also uses social media to engage with both *local* and *translocal* scenes, but it is important to note that these are not *virtual* scenes where the taste community is the only (or at least dominant) relation between actors. The scenes that Barthelmes engage with are concentrated on physical places. He relates to local scenes primarily in Boston, MA, and Providence, RI, and when he connects to translocal scenes, the connection is typically established (or at least strengthened) through face-to-face encounters with fans and colleagues at concerts.

Adapting this to Barthlemes' own terms, what he cultivates is a local and translocal *family*, which might be strengthened in its cohesiveness by social media, but is based on face-to-face relations.

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Case 4: Ellis Paul

Compared to the other musicians represented in this dissertation, Ellis Paul might be seen as a bit of an outlier. While the other informants are all in their thirties, Paul has recently turned 50. Moreover, where the other informants have their primary artistic practice in one or more bands, Paul is an active musician mainly as a solo artist.

I was introduced to Paul through Joey Lafyatis, an employee at his management company, whom I interviewed about the music scenes and music business of the Boston area. What makes Paul interesting for this dissertation is the fact that his career stretches over almost 30 years. Most of this time, he has been active as a professional musician, even though his music does not have a broad mainstream appeal. In this sense, his adds to the scope of my study by giving a perspective on both the sustainability of a career as a niche artist, but also adds a first hand experience of the impact of digitalization for a professional middle-layer artist. He thus adds an important historical dimension to this dissertation.

Ellis Paul is a singer-songwriter who builds and develops on the tradition of iconic folk singer-songwriters like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. In this sense, he is also stylistically more old-school than the other artists presented here. Although Paul has released 19 records, has received several Boston Music Awards, and placed music in movies and television, his career is primarily based on playing a large number of live shows in smaller venues. But he has also experimented with alternative ways to fund, distribute and contextualize his music through the Internet.

The development in income sources over the span of Paul's career from the beginning of the 1990's to today runs as a red thread through this chapter. First I analyze Paul's history of professional organization, from signing with a large independent label in the

beginning of his career to opting for a DIY approach later in his career. I then turn to analyzing Paul's online media practices as they have emerged as a consequence of the changing structural conditions. Two themes are central in this case; the diversification of income sources, and the increased importance of online communication as a platform for cultivating a core audience of super fans that become increasingly important for Paul's ability to sustain a professional career.

A Sustainable Career in Times of Digital Disruption

Ellis Paul describes himself first and foremost as a touring musician. Although he relies on multiple revenue streams to make a living from his music, his touring activities are central to his personal economy. However, Paul is one of only a few of the artists I interviewed to point to the fact that touring might be what constitutes the biggest revenue source for him, but it is also where he spends most money. When I asked him whether calling himself a touring musician was based on economy or identity, his response was:

> Well, it brings in the most money, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it makes the most money for me. It brings in the most money, but then I have a manager taking a percentage, and a booking agent taken a percentage, and then travel expenses taking a percentage. But it is the dominant way that I make my brand and get people familiar with me. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

This approach differs from the notion that the digital music economy involves a shift from touring as a way of promoting records, to recorded music as a way to promote of live performances (Wikström 2009, p. 137). For Paul, touring is the primary source of income, but it is also crucial to his artistic identity. As a singer-songwriter he is expected to live up to a certain image of the authentic artist, and this image arguably involves paying one's dues being a hardworking musician that knows one's craft – and within Paul's genre, this is typically done by performing live in intimate settings.

However, as Paul points out, the money earned on touring is also closely connected to a line of expenses. In this sense, touring can also be seen as an investment into the future career. This is where Paul hopes to maintain and grow his fan base as much as it is a place for exploiting these fans. For Paul, the significance of a loyal fan base

manifests itself in his ability to raise money to record and promote his two most recent records through crowdfunding.

Ellis Paul has released 19 albums. His first full-length album, *Say Something*, was released in 1993 on Black Wolf Records, which he co-founded with his manager Ralph Jaccodine[32]. He later went on to release seven albums on the Philo subsidiary label under the large roots oriented independent record label Rounder Records, before returning to self-releasing his albums on Black Wolf Records in 2008. Because he has been active as an established middle-layer artist through the years of digital disruption, Paul offers an interesting perspective on the development in conditions for artists in his category. Not surprisingly, he points to the decline in sales and subsequent reduced willingness of record labels to take risks as the most notable change.

> I started in the early 1990's. In 1992 I put out my first record, and back then it was before the Internet had taken hold and destroyed the music industry like Godzilla. So there was only one path for success, and that was getting on the road and getting signed to a record label. And then just touring, touring, touring, and having the record label sell your records and promote you. [...] the past ten years have been different because record labels are less likely to sign somebody that is not going to bring in a bunch of money to them, because it's not worth the risk any more because of the Internet. So most artist are doing it on their own. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

And the shift in listening patterns not only influences the record labels' willingness to take risks. It also has direct consequences for Paul's personal economy.

> Before I would sell [CDs], you know, at stores, and [...] people would buy them online, and we'd ship the actual CDs to people. So I was making about a few thousand dollars a month in the 1990's, due to people just ordering the CDs through the mail. And now they don't do that. So that income stream is completely gone. And I'm probably only selling half the amount of CDs at my shows that I was in the 1990's, because people can consume music differently, and they don't need to buy CDs any more to

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[32] http://www.ellispaul.com/index.php?page=bio

find you, and to have your music. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

The decline of the CD has also meant that Paul no longer considers CD sales as a distinct source of income, but rather perceives it as an integral part of the touring economy, simply because CD sales only happens in connection to concerts. He actually even refers to CDs as something he sells as "mementoes of the shows". Something fans bring home in order to remember a good evening out, more than something the buy in order to be able to hear his music. But he also has a clear sense that his fans understand his situation, and want to support him.

As mentioned earlier, Paul has relied on this for financing his two latest albums through crowdfunding. He has been able to raise 100,000 and 125,000 dollars respectively for these projects. The money was primarily spent on expenses that would traditionally have been covered by his record label. This includes recording, mixing, mastering, and printing of CDs, but also promotion and radio plugging. Although he has been able to raise substantial amounts, he has still been required to invest a small sum of his own money in for example production of music videos.

It is Paul's perception that his success with crowdfunding is reliant on the fact that he has an extraordinarily loyal and supportive fan base. In the first round of crowdfunding, he raised 100,000 dollars, even though only about 250 individuals pledged money for the project. This was in a period when crowdfunding was a relatively new phenomenon, which Paul presumes was a limitation to his ability to explain and convince fans about the concept. The second time he was able to get donations from three times as many people – about 800 individuals contributed – but he only raised marginally more money (125,000 dollars).

The most interesting thing about Paul's experiences with crowdfunding is arguably that he was able to raise such impressive amounts with so few pledgers. He received donations a high as 10,000 dollars, which testifies to the supportiveness and understanding of Paul's conditions as a middle level artist. But a comparison of the two campaigns also implies that he reached the most loyal and supportive fans in the first campaign, and that as he improves his ability to persuade more fans two contribute, the average donation sum drops significantly. On the one hand, this means that crowdfunding is an efficient way to attract more money from the most hardcore fans. But on the other hand, it also implies that even though Paul improves his ability

to persuade fans to donate, it is not likely that he would be able to attract significantly more money without also significantly growing the size of his fan base. Paul's own assumption is therefore that next time he does a round of crowdfunding, he will probably have even more people donating, but that the sum he would be able to raise would be about the same.

When an artist like Ellis Paul, who has seven records out on an established label, suddenly decides to opt for a DIY approach, one might get the idea that he has done so either for ideological reasons, or because he was dropped by the record label. But that is not the case for Paul. His experience with the record label has been that they were not interested in churning out a new pop star. As he phrases it "They were just looking for, you know, an Ellis Paul record" (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, 24. July 2015). In that sense, the label gave him the freedom to produce the music he wanted. Furthermore, the record label was actually ready to sign a new contract with Paul, but he actively chose to leave the record label when his contract expired. So Ellis Paul chose a DIY approach. Not for ideological reasons or out of necessity, but as a pragmatic choice at that stage of his career.

> I realized that I wasn't really making the kind of money I could because not only would they take the record sales. At that point I was becoming the sole distributor of my music, because all the record stores had closed. So the only person selling the records was me. And they were going to get some Internet sales, but I realized that if I put it up on iTunes, then I can get that myself. And if I'm the sole distributor, then why am I paying them. And I just realized that, you know, maybe it's time to stop. And because of that, even though I'm selling half as many records as I was in the nineties, I'm making twice as much money off of record sales, than I did back then. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

Furthermore, releasing the music independently also means that Paul owns the master rights to his recordings. As an artist that has been able to place his music in blockbusters movies by the Farrelly brother's (*Me, Myself, & Irene, Shallow Hal,* and *Hall Pass)[33],* synchronization royalties also becomes a substantial income source for Paul. But when the record label owns the master rights, they also take a considerable part of these money – even if they have no active role in placing music in the movies –

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[33] http://www.ellispaul.com/index.php?page=bio

which adds to the feeling that Paul refers to as the record label having hands in his pockets.

In that way, the choice to leave the record company is founded in the changing conditions for Ellis Paul and artists like him. Digitalization might have significantly reduced the ability to sell CDs, but it has also reduced Paul's dependency on the record label. As the traditional value chain of the music industry is fragmented and the record label's privileged access to gate-keepers and distribution erodes the record label becomes little more than a bank in the sense that they provide money for production of the album, but also typically are the first to recoup their investment when the record is released.

Crowdfunding has been an alternative way for Ellis Paul to secure the economic investment in production and promotion that he previously got from his record label. But even though he has been able to find an alternative economic model, it has meant a significant shift in his personal role as a professional musician. In his own words, he has effectively become his own record label, which adds a whole new dimension to his profession.

> Being a record label takes a lot of effort, so I don't know if I can ever do as good a job as the record label that was selling my stuff in the nineties. Because they have a staff, and they have brand that is separate from mine. They have relationships with radio stations and distributors. And when you're doing it on your own, you don't have a lot of those preordained relationships. So, I'm still learning how to be a record label. Using my manager, and hiring out mercenary promoters and radio people to sell the record. It's all new. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

Being an independent artist with his own record label does not mean that Paul takes care of everything on his own. In fact, as can be seen in the quote above, he is very conscious about his own limitations, and outsources a lot of tasks that he isn't competent in doing. Thus, the major shift from being signed to a record label is not as much in the restriction on the time and effort he can devote to his music. He is successful enough to be able to pay people to perform a lot of the tasks. Rather, the role change has to do with responsibility. Running his own record label, he is the one who ultimately has to make decisions on how to prioritize and finance different task,

as well as recruiting competent people to take care of the tasks, both professionals as well as talented people from his personal network.

Media Strategies: Building Multiple Revenue Streams

Ellis Paul's media practices are closely tied to the changes in his income streams. From his perspective, the Internet has ruined parts of his old business model – most importantly with the decline of CD sales – but it has also created possibilitites of creating new income streams. He utilizes different open and gated media platforms to differentiate between loyal and casual fans, and he produces a variety of media products that makes it possible to consolidate his close relationship to his core fans while also taking advantage of their willingness to support him economically. In line with the idea that a realtively small but loyal fan-base can support a professional career (Kelly Kevin 2008), Paul seeks to offer a variety of media products that increase his fans ability to get closer to him, while also generating a higher income.

Apart from crowdfunding, which Paul treats more like an investment in production and promotion than something to rely on for a salary, he has numerous other initiatives that add to his income. A particularly notable new income stream comes from his practice of doing webcast concerts through the service Concert Window[34]. Approximately once a month, Paul does a Concert Window show. It is not uncommon that between 150 and 200 people join the shows, and he estimates that he can make up to 10,000 dollars a year on these show. This is obviously not enough to earn him a living in itself, but it adds an extra stream to his existing income streams. And he can do it from his home, which is significant because he, as a touring musician, already spends a lot of time away from his family.

From my interview with Paul, it became clear that the driving force behind the diversification of media products has been a pursuit of financial stability. In general, Paul stresses the importance of cultivating multiple income streams, both because several small income streams can add up to a significant amount of money, but also because it makes him less reliant on a particular income stream.

> I'm really clear about creating multiple income streams. That's one way
> that I guarantee that I am making enough money to establish myself in a

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[34] www.concertwindow.com

> way that is, you know, just going to feed my kids. So I've started doing children's music, and I've started doing children's shows. And that was this brand new income stream that doesn't get in the way of anything I do as an adult singer-songwriter. I do matinee shows at eleven o'clock at the venue that I'm playing that night. I'm making extra thousands dollars doing it. I put out records that people at my adult shows buy – records for their children. And little things like that: putting out a children's book, you know. I have friends that teach song writing. I occasionally do that and get paid for it. [...] I have had songs in movies. I have co-written songs for other people. I'm just trying to establish as many different income streams, so I'm not solely reliant on being on the road all the time, because eventually I'm going to be old. And to create enough archive of music, so I'm making money off of the publishing royalties even when I'm not touring as a musician. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

The last aspect is probably more pertinent to Paul than to some of his younger colleagues for two reasons. First, because he has a family to take care of, which makes him more reliant on having a relatively stable income. Secondly, because touring is very hard work, and as he grows older, he also becomes more aware that he might not be able to keep up the high number of concerts forever. But it also accentuates an aspect of being a professional musician that is arguably more commonly shared by musicians from a broader spectrum of ages, and that is they aspire not only to make original and affecting art, but also aspire to build an economically sustainable career from doing this.

One might think that the aspiration towards a middle class life would also involve making pragmatic choices where potential earnings influence the artistic practice. But in Paul's perception, this has not been the case for him.

> I've been lucky because what I consider to be art does attract money. There's enough pop music in what I love [...]. So I don't have to think in those terms. All I need to do is write Ellis Paul songs, and then I can make a living. As soon as I start trying to make pop music or you know, I'll fall on my face. So I just have to be true to what I love, and trust that. And I've been able to do it. I don't think I've had a moment where I felt like I was selling out just to get people to listen. [...] I just get to write the songs

> that I want to write because I'm an independent artist, which is great. […] If you showed me, at the age of twenty-five, what I'm doing at the age of fifty, artistically, I would have been very happy, I think, to look at what I've done. I would have wanted to have, maybe, more record sales. Maybe be playing for five times as many people – maybe a thousand a night instead of two hundred a night. But as far as the art is concerned, and how good that has gotten over the years, I think my twenty-five-year-old self would have been very proud of what I've done. (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

Even when he was signed to a record label, it was his clear perception that they gave him a lot of freedom to write and record the music he wanted to. In that sense, this freedom has not been a factor in leaving the record label.

Though Paul is very reflexive about his entrepreneurial practices, these practices manifest themselves separately from the practice of creating the music. Whether it is crowdfunding, writing children's books, placing music in a movie, or performing and streaming a show live through Concert Window, all of these practices are ways to earn money on the music he writes, but to Paul, the actual music has to be free from other people's expectations. This is a clear difference from traditional entrepreneurship. Where the product qualities would usually be subject to be adjusted to meet consumer demands, Paul sees it as crucial to the quality of his music that he doesn't think of the commercial viability when creating his music.

The effect of this is that the area of his profession where he thinks pragmatically and creatively about the commercial aspects of his music is primarily concerning his business models. This, in turn, has meant that one of the primary ways for Paul to add to his income streams is through affording various forms of access to himself. This can take multiple forms. One form is the Concert Window shows, where Paul give fans an opportunity to get an alternative live experience that on the one hand supplements his live concerts in offering a live experience to fans that are not able to see him when he is touring, and on the other hand it might appeal to his most loyal fans, because it adds a layer of intimacy and access by broadcasting from his own living room, which means they get an alternative experience than what they get when attending one of his live concerts.

Another form of selling access has been through a channel on Amplifi.fm. Here, fans pay a monthly fee to be part of a more exclusive group of fans that get access to exclusive content from Ellis Paul. The material he posts includes exclusive previews of upcoming releases, thoughts and stories behind the music, as well as music and memorabilia from his personal archive. But arguably the most important affordance is the closer interaction between Paul and this exclusive group of fans.

Paul also uses Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to disseminate content and updates to his fans. In this light, it becomes important for the ability to charge some fans five dollars a month that there is a discernable difference between the access offered on the openly accessible media, and in the closed group of core fans that pay for exclusivity. Paul's way of doing this has been through the level of personal engagement on the different social media. Although he occasionally posts music, videos, and small glimpses of his life on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube where everyone can see them, these posts are generally connected to a specific show, or a specific release. Like this post on Facebook from April 13 2015:
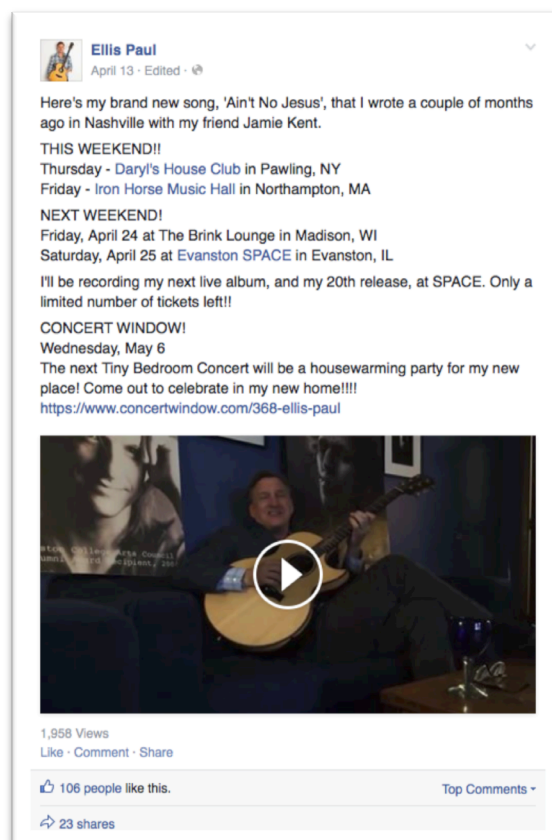
In addition, Paul rarely answers to questions or comments posted to his Facebook or Twitter that are not directly linked to his touring, whereas he engages more actively in conversations on Amplifi.fm. For Paul this is a way to create a distinct difference between the paying and the non-paying fans, but it is also a way to filter the requests and comments to a level where he can overcome answering his fans. As he puts it, Amplifi " [...] helps define who your core fan is. These are people that are really interested in having something new from you on a weekly basis. And they want to communicate with you directly" (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014). Although the fans get an exclusive song (often from Paul's archive of live recordings) to stream or download every week, some of the material he posts are just embedded YouTube videos, and therefore not, strictly speaking, exclusive material. In this case it becomes even clearer that the exclusivity offered by Paul is primarily through his framing and discussion of the material, rather than the content itself.

When reflecting over the nature of his relationship with his fans during his career, Paul highlights the increased access as the most important change.

> I guess people have access that they didn't have. So, over the years, I think, nationally, because I tour so much and because I talk to people on Facebook and I see their comments and stuff, I feel like I get to know a lot of people better. And some of these people have been coming to my shows for twenty years, so I actually know them by name, I recognize their faces, I remember what state they're from. I remember details of their lives if they tell me any of them. And the Internet has just straightened all of that stuff because it has provided for more communication between me and them. [...] I feel like people are there for me. I can access them. I never could do that before. How could I reach 100,000 people before? (Ellis Paul, Personal interview, July 24 2014)

This points not only to the fact that Paul's professional career is increasingly reliant on giving fans access to him as an artist, it has also provided him access to them in an unprecedented manner. There are two important implications in this. First, it makes it possible to give fans knowledge of the creative process, his personal life, and his thoughts on his own and other artists' music. Although he has previously had some access to print media where he could talk about these things (some of the exclusive material he shares on Amplifi is indeed old scrapbook clippings from newspapers and

magazines), the extent to which he controls when and what to share is significantly higher with the online possibilities.

All in all, Ellis Paul is an illustrative case of how the themes touched upon in the previous cases all play together and shape a career as middle-layer artist. Paul's media production, professional organization, and relationship to his fans have not seen a discontinual break, but rather been through a continuous and ongoing development. Although his practices within most of these aspects are now significantly different than they were a decade ago, the changes have happened in response to the changing framework conditions, and the guiding principle behond these changes has been to maintain a career that is built upon monetizing on a specific artistic identity closely tied to personal and artistic integrity. This means that although a lot of the changes stem from economic shifts, the economy is not a guiding principle in itself.

Paul has taken a decidedly entrepreneurial shift in his career by choosing to leave his record label, and this has changed the nature of the professional roles he take on. He is not only a musician and songwriter; he is also media producer, booker, and label manager. And although these changes have been initiated as an indirect consequence of digitalization they have consequences that reach far beyond the simplistic notions of either being a 'sell-out' (by being aware of commercial aspects of ones career) or being 'empowered' (by the ability to circumvent music business gate-keepers). These new roles are part of a renegotiation of what it means to be a middle-layer musician.

Part Three: Further Development of Analytical Themes

I now turn to a discussion of the broader implications of the findings in these analyses. First, I discuss how the professional practices portrayed in the case studies can be understood as entrepreneurial practices. I relate this point to existing theories of cultural production in the cultural industries and cultural entrepreneurs, arguing that middle-layer musicians are *ad hoc entrepreneurs*. Second, I draw from Meyrowitz's concept of *feedback loops* (1985) to discuss the relationship between the introduction of new media and the constitution of new social roles and forms of industry organization.

13

Ad Hoc Entrepreneurs

In writing the four case studies it has become increasingly clear to me that these artists – in spite of their idiosyncratic choices, economies, and career trajectories – share a common approach to their professional careers. This chapter develops the themes identified in the case studies and analyses how these middle-layer musicians take on a role as what I call *ad hoc entrepreneurs*. A role that emerges as a response to the structural changes within the music industries outlined in chapter 6, but is shaped by ideologies and values connected to cultural work.

What motivates this conceptualization is the need for developing existing understandings of the relation between artistic and economic interests of middle-layer musicians in the new media landscape.

This chapter first sums up how entrepreneurialism is manifested in the case studies. Second, it develops David Hesmondhalgh's understandings of different eras of cultural production and suggest that recent changes in the structural organization of the music industries caused by digitalization have led us to a new era of cultural production in which artists are increasingly self-organized in terms of the commercial aspects of their career. Third, it explores the conception of the artist as entrepreneur and its history of conflict between economic and artistic rationales. Fourth, the new role of communication in artists' entrepreneurial practices is analyzed. Finally, Mintzberg's conception of *adhocracies* is adapted as a basis for understanding how middle-layer musicians, in their pursuits of a sustainable career as professional musicians, adopt a practice as 'ad hoc entrepreneurs', in which they actively mediate artistic ideals and economic considerations.

Making Sense of Middle-Layer Musicians' Organizational Practices

This chapter is to some extent the product of a gradual discovery of the importance of middle-layer artists' extra musical labor. When I started this project, my focus was on understanding how artists engaged with fans through social media. How they used them to communicate a certain persona, and how that persona could be conceptualized as a brand. But quite early in my fieldwork it became clear to me that the form of self-presentation they performed online was not a direct adaptation of the practices artists had always had on stage. Though these artists ideally wanted social media to be an expansion of their artistic universe – a place where they engaged in dialogue and friendship with people that shared their taste, and a place where they could let fans immerse themselves even deeper into the meanings behind their music. Several artists also told me that they felt that they didn't live up to these ideals, and that they were too 'commercial' and 'self-promoting' in their style.

I gradually came to recognize that some of these artists turned to social media primarily because they saw it as a way to attract new audiences without having access to print and broadcast media or money to spend on advertising. In other words, it was a performance of the activities artists had previously relied on record labels to do. In this respect, the move is to some extent economically motivated.

Stolberg and Barthelmes both explicitly told me that they felt they were not as good at interacting with their fans, as they wanted to be. However in both cases social media played a central role in their ways of building professional networks. For Stolberg, a means of communicating the band's many projects to a global audience. For Barthelmes, a way of cultivating a 'road family' which provided him well-attended concerts in foreign cities and opening gigs in and around Boston.

Even though this is an interesting point in itself it was also an indication that the way these musicians approached social media was symptomatic for the way they approached their whole career. The media practices of these artists were just one manifestation of an entrepreneurial approach to professional activities.

Each of the four artists has his idiosyncratic form of entrepreneurial practices, which fits his competencies, career trajectory and professional ambitions. Stolberg takes on the full role of artist manager for Efterklang. He even runs a record label with the primary purpose of releasing the band's records. But the amount of labor involved in this also means that he has become somewhat distanced from the artistic practices of

the band. Thomsen and Veto have chosen a more traditional form of organization. They partnered with a manager at an early stage of their career, and have released their music on established labels. First a small independent label and then an international major label. Veto's entrepreneurial practices manifest themselves through the establishment of different company forms in order to manage and optimize the revenue streams at particular career stages. For Barthelmes the organization is a lot less formal. He nevertheless has a clear focus on building and maintaining networks. Barthelmes and his bands operate on the fringes of the recording industry, but have close ties to specific actors in the live industry. Paul has gone from a large independent label to self-releasing his most recent albums. Although he has always considered himself a touring musician and continues to have a manager, this move has meant that he has to learn many new professional skills.

Though these situations are different, they also have commonalities. First they all have a high degree of self-dependence. Though they all to some extent work with professional partners (primarily artist managers and record labels), their form of organization generally leads to situations where these artists, when all comes to all, are responsible for most activities related to music making. There is more diversity in how much responsibility the artists have for promotion, and all of them are connected to the industry to secure distribution of their music. Secondly, the distinct practices and forms of organization of these artists have emerged not as a result of a distinct strategy, but as reflexive responses to particular challenges in their career. Most of these challenges are related to providing a sustainable economy from their music.

For Stolberg and Efterklang, the decision to form their own record label was initially a way of getting their music out, even if established labels couldn't see the potential. But later it became a conscious choice that gave them a higher share of revenue from their home market. For Thomsen and Veto, the forming of a partnership was a necessity to keep track of the band's economy as their career took off. When they later formed a limited liability company, they were motivated by the prospects of securing a higher share of revenue from exploiting rights to the master recording, while still trying to limit the financial risk for the band members as private individuals. The wish to do so was directly linked to the falling revenue from CD sales. Barthelmes and his bands have chosen not to release their music on a label because they felt that at their career stage they were better off pocketing all of the income from record sales for themselves, but he also acknowledges that a record label might be necessary to move his career to the next level of becoming a truly national touring act. Ellis Paul's motivation for

leaving his record label and releasing his music independently was based on similar deliberations. Although he is actually a national touring act, he felt that the label had their hands in his pockets: the label was making money from his sales and movie synchronization even though they had little effect on his income, as album sales had become an ancillary income from touring rather than an income source in its own right, so that he had already effectively become the sole distributor of his own CDs.

In this sense, these middle-layer artists choose an entrepreneurial approach to their career as a way to make more money. This is, however, not to be perceived as an indication that artists are becoming more commercial. It is a way for them to negotiate the economic challenges that have emerged in the wake of digitalization. Importantly, though, these practices are economically motivated, they are still secondary to the drive to make art. These musicians say they strive for at better economy in order to free up time and resources for making their art. The artists are not taking entrepreneurial measures to become rich; they strive for a middle class life while being able to create and play their own music.

But haven't middle-layer musicians always struggled to make ends meet? And haven't their practices always had elements of entrepreneurialism? The obvious answer to both questions would naturally be 'yes'. However digitalization has changed the conditions for cultural production in two respects. First, artists are less dependent on traditional industry and media gatekeepers. Although most successful artists still rely on professional partners like managers, bookers and record labels, digitalization has led to a situation where artists have the opportunity to record their music and communicate with audiences that they didn't have before. Second, the recession of the recording industry has minimized the earnings from recorded music and led record labels to shift risk onto the artists by investing less in talent development and recording. The combined effect of these two tendencies is that musicians are subject to both *push* and *pull* effects that lead them to an increased entrepreneurialism.

These middle-layer artists are, paradoxically, small-scale independent contractors, embedded in international industry structures, who make commercial decisions based on non-commercial objectives. The rest of this chapter is an exploration of that complexity.

A New Era of Cultural Production?

Building on Raymond Williams' thoughts about long-term changes in cultural production, David Hesmondhalgh (Hesmondhalgh 2012) identifies three eras in the development of cultural production in Europe (with parallels elsewhere). He names each of the eras after the main form of social relations between 'symbol creators' and the rest of the society: 1) A *patronage and artisanal era* from the middle ages until the 19th century, characterized by two strata of relations: the patronage of artist by courts and churches, and a artisanal production by self-employed skilled craftsmen. 2) A *market professional* era from the 19th century onward, where art works became increasingly commodified, and where a layer of intermediaries emerged, thereby establishing a division of labor akin to the contemporary development known in other parts of society in connection to industrialization, and establishing a system where artists where increasingly paid in the form of royalties.

Hesmondhalgh refers to the third era, from the 1950s onwards, as the *complex professional* (modifying Williams' concept *corporate professional)* era of cultural production, which is characterized by certain trends:

> The commissioning of works became professionalized and more organized. Increasing numbers of people also became direct employees of cultural companies, on retainers and contracts. Alongside older activities, such as writing books, performing music and acting out plays, new media technologies appeared – most notably radio, film and television. (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 67)

Hesmondhalgh stresses that the labeling of the era of cultural production as complex professional does not mean that this is the only form, but rather as the dominant form (coexisting with previous forms) of cultural production from the 1950s onward. So previous forms of cultural production have continued to exist and evolve in parallel to the dominant forms. Hesmondhalgh points to sponsorships as a growing example of new forms of patronage and the residual forms of artisanal production as a way creative autonomy is ceded to cultural workers (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 68).

In order to evaluate change in cultural production, Hesmondhalgh argues that one should consider issues of commodification as well as business ownership and structure. I will start out analyzing changes in commodification of music, and then return to issues of business ownership and structure.

Hesmondhalgh offers an account of the different stages of commodification of printed texts (from material objects 'books', over copyrighted 'works', to access to online databases) as an example of issues related to commodification (Hesmondhalgh 2012, p. 70). In the case of music, one might relatively non-controversially outline the development of commodification as a development from commodification of live performance by minstrels, as well as musicians employed by courts and churches, over commodification of music as material object in the form of sheet music and later recordings, to commodification of music as immaterial rights to a copyrighted work in the form of performance rights.

Following the recession in the recording industry since the turn of the millennium, two tendencies have become increasingly prominent: Commodification of the artist brand through corporate sponsorships and brand partnerships, and commodification of access to recorded music in immaterial form with online music streaming services and through performance rights (see e.g. the discussion about 360 deals in Meier 2013; Stahl & Meier 2012; Wikström 2013, and earlier in this dissertation). This invokes a significant shift in the dominant form of commodification for middle-layer musicians. These musicians are increasingly reliant on a diverse portfolio of immaterial rights to compositions and recordings, as well as their artistic persona (monetized through concerts and sponsorships) as the dominant source of commodification.

This shift has implications for the development in business ownership and organization, which is also what Hesmondhalgh recommends as a second parameter of analysis.

Hesmondhalgh cites conglomeration and vertical integration as one of the most significant features of the complex professional era. He describes this process as intensifying from the first signs of conglomeration in the cultural industries in the 1960s to a more pervasive generation of conglomerates.

> Partly as a result of mergers and acquisitions of the kind discussed in the last section, a new generation of global multimedia mega-corporations had come to dominate the revenues gained from global cultural industry markets by the late 1990s. These were very much bigger companies than those that had previously dominated cultural industries, such as film or television or newspapers. Their reach across different industries gave them considerable potential influence on government policy and on the

very nature of cultural production itself. The biggest companies were also
increasingly international and this too enhanced their lobbying clout.
(Hesmondhalgh 2012, pp. 192-193)

However, one of Hesmondhalgh's arguments for preferring the term 'complex
professional' over Williams' 'corporate professional' is that the emergence of vertically
integrated conglomerates is not the only development of the period. Parallel to the
dominance of large corporations, we have also seen an undergrowth of smaller
companies, and over time "more and more importance was attached to them as sites of
creative independence, reflecting anxieties about the negative effects of big,
bureaucratic organisations on society and cultural production" (Hesmondhalgh 2012,
p. 73).

There is no doubt that the two-way movement of conglomeration on one side, and
small-scale independent businesses on the other side is still present today, but I will
argue that the nature of the relation between the two has changed. When
Hesmondhalgh writes about small companies it is primarily in the form of
independent record labels, publishers, etc. These companies have, however, suffered
severely from the consequences of the economic recession in the wake of
digitalization, and are to a large extent now owned and operated as sub labels to the
major label, or rely on partnerships with major labels for marketing and distribution.
As analyzed in chapter 6, this has been part of the way major labels have been
managing risk by reducing their investment in development of new music, and rather
relying on their commercial power later in the process of bringing the music to
market. But this does not mean that small businesses are non-existent – rather
conglomerates and small businesses have been polarized even further.

As we have seen in the case studies in the previous chapters, some middle-layer artists
are adopting an organizational structure as small businesses, either for the sake of
producing a master recording that is then licensed to a label, or for the sake of
releasing records independently. This is in itself a significant shift in structures of
ownership and organization. When artists form company structures and retain
ownership over master rights, they take more risk but can also expect a larger share of
the profit if they are successful. We saw how Ellis Paul and Jens Skov Thomsen chose
to leave their labels at a mature stage of their careers to get a larger share of revenue
from alternative sources like e.g. publishing. For them, the entrepreneurial approach
was a way to counter an economic downturn in CD sales. For Barthelmes (and to some

extent also Stolberg), the entrepreneurial approach has been a way to get their music out. Both established their careers in a period where record labels were risk-averse because of declining sales, and therefore less inclined to take on non-mainstream artists without a solid track record.

In this sense, the entrepreneurial approach can be understood as a response to the changes in forms of commodification and the changes in industry organization that has accompanied them. From the perspective of middle-layer musicians, the increased competition from amateurs stemming from the democratization of production of distribution of music, and the attempts from record labels to shift risk to artists have been two particularly significant aspects of these changes. All of the four cases discussed in the previous chapters have, in their own idiosyncratic ways, chosen a form of organization that increases their control and ownership over immaterial rights. Importantly, this is not a negation of Hesmondhalgh's argument about the hegemony of vertically integrated conglomerates at an industry level, but an attempt to nuance the conception of the role of artists within this overall structure. Though some musicians have long been considered entrepreneurs (I will elaborate on this in the next section), I suggest that the specific structural conditions cause contemporary middle-layer musicians to take on a role as entrepreneurs. This form of entrepreneurialism differs from the artisanal form of cultural production because the musicians are more or less embedded in a corporate framework. They play on venues and festivals with financial ties to international promoters; they distribute their music on global streaming services; and some of them collaborate with record labels of varying sizes.

Keeping in mind that Hesmondhalgh argues that specific eras are characterized by a dominant form of cultural production, co-existing with previous forms, I will argue that what the changes in commodification and organization arguably constitutes a new era of production in the music industries – an entrepreneurial era.

Middle-layer Musicians as Entrepreneurs

My understanding of middle-layer musicians as entrepreneurs builds on the conception of 'cultural entrepreneurs', which applies to labor across a variety of cultural industries. The term 'cultural entrepreneur' has been defined as a subjectivity that combines three elements:

First, these individuals create new cultural products such as songs, recordings, videos and performances requiring nuanced understandings of current cultural forms. Second, they are oriented towards accessing opportunities to produce an identity and social trajectory as a 'new taste maker' (Bourdieu 1984). Third, they are 'entrepreneurs' because they have to find innovative ways of doing so without recourse to significant holdings of economic capital due to their labour market position. (Scott 2012, p. 243)

What is interesting in this conception is the contrast to the conception of entrepreneurs within economy, where they are traditionally understood in terms of their ability to create economic growth through innovation (Schumpeter 1934). For the cultural entrepreneur, the pursuit of financial gain is subordinate to issues of identity, artistic recognition, and artistic autonomy (Scott 2012; Swedberg 2006). This conception differs significantly from the previous understandings of music entrepreneurs. Jason Toynbee for instance builds on the work of Peterson and Berger (Peterson & Berger 1971), and DiMaggio (DiMaggio 1977), and understands music entrepreneurship as a decentralizing force, but nevertheless carried out by capital seeking (opportunist) independent intermediaries (Toynbee 2000, pp. 8-13).

It is therefore important to emphasize that in line with the perception of Morris (2013), this dissertation's notion of musicians as cultural entrepreneurs is not meant to be a challenge of the authenticity of the artists involved, but an acknowledgement of the entrepreneurial responsibilities and acumen involved in working as a musician.

What characterizes the current role of middle-layer musicians as entrepreneurs is that it emerges as a response to structural and economic change in the music industries. But the role is continuously shaped by the ideologies and values that dominate cultural work.

We saw this most clearly in the case of Ellis Paul. His choice to leave his label and start self-releasing his albums, as well as his efforts to build supplementary income streams, were not forced upon him, nor was it a strategic measure to grow his career. It was the dwindling income from record sales that led him to realize that he had to reevaluate his business organization and opt for an entrepreneurial approach. At the same time, new technology offered him new possibilities for alternative income

streams. Importantly, the shift not only improves Paul's economy, but also allows him to connect even more closely to his core fans.

Other cases displayed similar dynamics. Thomsen, for instance, emphasizes that the wish to mediate control with economic security was a central motivation for establishing a limited liability company and using that as a basis for recording a record that was then licensed to a major label under a multiple rights deal.

Popular music produced in this field simultaneously takes the form of a cultural commodity and a work of art. As Ryan phrases it, "The culture industry is explicable not as purely capitalist but only in its combination with art" (Ryan 1992, p. 14).

As mentioned in chapter 3, being a professional musician is almost an ideological paradox. On one hand, the artist is a *professional,* which implies both being skilled and having music as his or her primary occupation. On the other hand, the musician is an *artist.* Everyday ideological understandings of the nature of cultural work often build on the romanticist (dating back to at least the late eighteenth century) notion of the artist as someone that is autonomous from commercial activity and accumulation of wealth. However, this understanding ignores the fact that the production of art is carried out within the structural frameworks of capitalist society.

> The artist was defined and became recognised as the antithesis to the rational and calculative subject of the modern age — and was thus, in a significant sense, a product of the very commercial society from which it claimed to stand apart. Indeed, it soon became clear that the apparently separated worlds of art and commerce shared an intimate relationship. (Banks 2010, p. 253)

Interestingly, even though the romanticist notion of artistic autonomy has been challenged by marketization and industrialization, it has nevertheless endured. Banks continues:

> [...] while much cultural work remains in service only to the accumulation imperative, cultural industries should not be understood as sites of a standardised and general exploitation, but as loci for a contestable and transformable political economy of work. (Banks 2010, p. 266)

In other words, it might seem contradictory to conceptualize artists as entrepreneurs, but even though the idea of an antagonistic relationship between creativity and commerce is sometimes brushed off as naïve, it also contains real contradictions and struggles for art under capitalist conditions (Hesmondhalgh & Meier 2015). However, the entrepreneurial activities I have identified here seem to be perceived by the artists as legitimized by being subordinate to the ideologies and values outlined above. In other words, the motivations behind the entrepreneurial approach become crucial.

In this sense, issues of dependence and independence become central. Because being an entrepreneur might compromise the separation of artistic creation and economic incentives, but acting as an entrepreneur also makes the artists less dependent on powerful industry gatekeepers in their creative process. Although, the extent of independence can be contested (Stahl 2013), this is still important, at least because the sheer notion of independence functions as a symbolic value within popular music (Hesmondhalgh & Meier 2015).

Communication and Entrepreneurship

As outlined above, the attempt to combine the pursuit of artistic integrity with the need for an adequate economy is a key motivation for many middle-layer artists. One of the ways to make this happen is by utilizing new media platforms. Through social media and online music services, middle-layer artists are given increased opportunities to distribute their music and communicate with their audiences. As will be analyzed in depth later, this has significant implications for the relationship between artists and fans. But these new social environments also "[…] exert new entrepreneurial pressures in terms of consistency of content production and strategies of representation and performance" (Morris 2013, p. 276). The *opportunity* of increased communication quickly turned into an *expectation* of increased communication. The case studies showed how middle-layer artists maintain a presence on a variety of online media platforms, and because of this, they need to produce content for different channels.

So one effect of social media on the role of middle-layer musicians as entrepreneurs is that communication and media production is becoming central.

This centrality of social media in the entrepreneurial practices of middle-layer musicians relates to the two distinct areas of marketing and networking. There are two reasons for this: first, social media represents a free opportunity to market music, which is crucial because they work relatively '*sans* economic capital' (Scott 2012, p. 242), but nevertheless need to differentiate themselves from a layer of amateur artists. Secondly, the role of musicians as entrepreneurs "[...] is as much about making connections as it is about making sales" (Morris 2013, p. 282). We saw the last aspect in different forms for example in the cases of Brian Barthelmes and Ellis Paul. For Barthelmes, social media was most importantly a tool for cultivating his professional network, whereas Paul deliberately sought to distinguish between different levels of fan engagement in order to both strengthen and capitalize on the close relation to his core fans.

Importantly, my case studies showed that these artists have a pragmatic approach to their communication practices. They view it as a valuable way of connecting with audiences and colleagues, and establishing meaningful relationships, but they also view it as integral to sustaining a professional career, and therefore some of them explicitly addressed a sense of inadequacy in their ability to engage fully with their audiences, as well as a fear of appearing too pushy in using social media as a marketing tool. In other words, these artists' use of social media is continually negotiated to balance the ideologies of 'friendship' with the commercial dimension of sustaining a professional career.

In this sense, accumulation of social capital through communication can be understood as a distinct form of labor for professional musicians. As music increasingly becomes commodified as media products, access to media gatekeepers (in traditional media) and strong personal connections with audiences and tastemakers (in digital media) becomes an imperative for musicians that aspire to a professional career. Social networks (both in size and strength of ties) are valuable assets for musicians.

Defining Ad Hoc Entrepreneurs

Within organizational theory, Henry Mintzberg and Alexandra McHugh have developed the term 'adhocracy' as a conception of the organizational form often found in organizations that work with complex and innovative tasks. Although their theory is

developed within larger organization than a middle-layer band, it is worth noting that a lot of the characteristics of adhocracies also apply to the forms of organization identified among the musicians in my case studies. Mintzberg and McHugh, among other things, emphasizes that adhocracies tend to form in areas where focus is on relatively unique output, and that the complex and unpredictable nature of work requires an organization based primarily on mutual adjustment rather than formal structures and hierarchy, and that the organization is decentralized 'selectively' according to the availability of information and expertise (Mintzberg & McHugh 1985, pp. 160-161).

Analyzing strategy formation, Mintzberg and McHugh distinguishes between 'deliberate strategies', where the underlying intentions are realized, and 'emergent strategies', where patterns are realized in spite, or in absence, of intentions (Mintzberg & McHugh 1985, p. 161). Mintzberg explicitly identifies deliberate strategies as well suited for a bureaucracy, whereas he characterizes emergent strategies as the form of strategy formation most compatible with an adhocracy (Mintzberg & McHugh 1985, p. 162).

With this in mind, it is interesting that my case studies show emergent strategies as the prominent form of strategy formation for the middle-layer artists studied, both in terms of organization and communication. We saw how the musicians typically had a quite clear sense of their practices as well as the motivations for choosing these, but none of them had a deliberate strategy to guide these practices. Within the bands studied, division of tasks was furthermore typically done through what Mintzberg calls mutual adjustment – often with more or less unspoken understandings of the competencies of the individual band members, as well as of the competencies required to bring in from outside the band.

Although I will not make the claim that the middle-layer musicians studied in this dissertation organize in full-blown adhocracies (the difference is size to the organizations for which Mintzberg developed the term is too big), the ad hoc (non-strategic) element becomes central to integrating the artistic ideologies and values with an entrepreneurial approach. It is a manifest display of the subordination of commercial incentives to artistic incentives. I therefore adapt the *ad hoc* element of both organization and strategy formation to my understanding of the way middle-layer musicians have developed their entrepreneurial approach.

I use the term 'ad hoc entrepreneurs' to describe this. In this sense, middle-layer musicians as ad hoc entrepreneurs are defined by a combination of organizational and motivational characteristics. They organize on an ad hoc basis in response to concrete challenges and opportunities. These challenges and opportunities can arise externally (as a result of changing structural conditions), as well as internally (related to the artist's career trajectory or pursuit of self-realization). They rely on emergent strategies in which artistic values and ideologies significantly shape business and communication practices. Middle-layer musicians as ad hoc entrepreneurs draw extensively on their own competencies, as well as those available within their close personal networks. This enables them to operate with low costs, while securing a high degree of control and flexibility. Although often connected to bureaucratic structures of the music industries, these musicians organize their work in informal networks with a blurred line between personal and professional networks. Typically they employ an artist manager as an intermediary figure, who connects them to the larger industry structures, whereas they cultivate personal and professional networks on their own.

14

The Deep Effects of Digitalization

As explored in the previous chapter, the role of middle-layer artists as ad hoc entrepreneurs emerges from the nexus between the introduction of networked media, changing music industry organization and ideologies of cultural labor. This implies that the introduction of new media is somehow connected to changing social roles, both in related to social situations and organizational frameworks.

As demonstrated by the case studies and the previous chapter, the social roles of middle-layer musicians are shaped in response to the challenges and opportunities offered by new media. New media affect the nature of personal and professional networks; they affect the economic conditions for a professional career; they change the production and dissemination of music and media texts; they affect the boundaries and relations of regional and international music markets; and they indirectly affect the way musicians organize their professional activities.

This chapter analyzes how the introduction of 'new' networked media is related to 1) the expectations of how middle-layer musicians should behave, 2) the character of media content that these musicians produce and distribute, 3) the musicians' access to local and translocal scenes and markets, as well as the relationship with fans, and 4) the changing organization of the music industries, and the consequences for middle-layer musicians.

The chapter builds on Meyrowitz's (1985) conception of how media change social situations through *effect loops*. He argues that processes that are often seen as "spontaneous human decisions that independently cause social change" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173), are actually often responses to the social changes caused by the introduction of new media. He calls these processes *effect loops* for two reasons:

> (1) because they not only respond to changes in the media but also enhance the effects of new media, and (2) because they act as "feedback loops" by working to establish a new balance between patterns of information flow and other social conventions; that is, these three variables change so as to return the social system to *structural equilibrium,* yet in so doing, they bring about *substantive change.* (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173) [Italics in original]

The effect loops that Meyrowitz analyzes are related to overlapping aspects of mediated communication concerned with *etiquette*, *media content* and *territorial access*. This chapter first discusses these three aspects in relation to middle-layer musicians in digital media, and then argues for adding a fourth *industry organization loop*.

The Etiquette Loop

The introduction of new media can alter social situations, for example by altering the social situation and collapsing contexts. This affects when, where, and for whom we perform, as well as the level of informational control. This may cause the performer to change behavior in order to adapt to changes in the mediated situation, while also giving access to social situations that we might previously have been excluded from. In this way, "Changes in the notion of 'appropriate' roles and behaviors […] can often be traced back to structural changes in social situations" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173). In turn, these changed behaviors feed back into the media, whereby new media "[…] not only affect the way people behave, but they eventually affect the way people feel they *should* behave." (ibid, p. 175). Meyrowitz calls this the 'etiquette loop'.

Considering the introduction of digital media in the music industries, we can see substantial traces of this dynamic in the use of social media. With the advent of MySpace, online music forums went from being primarily arenas for fans interacting with each other to being a place where artists and fans interacted to an unprecedented extent. Artists that turned to MySpace in these years often tell stories of reaching out to fans in ways that would have been very unconventional in earlier eras. Requesting friendships from fans of similar bands, and copy/pasting seemingly 'personal' invitations to shows became a widespread way of marketing upcoming bands.

Similarly the act of befriending an artist and seeking more direct interaction became a trivial act that was no longer reserved for super fans (Mjøs 2012).

Over time, these practices have come to be the expected norm. The case studies showed how Stolberg and Barthelmes at times felt inadequate in their attempts to engage and respond to requests and messages from their fans. It also manifested itself in a more general attitude among the musicians that a social media presence is not only an option, but also a requirement for a professional career.

These developments show how the etiquette loop affected social roles with the introduction of social media. New social roles emerged from the changed informational setting and the thereby following collapse of personal and professional communication within one platform. On the one hand, the distinction between musicians and fans has been blurred. Fans are now granted access to information about and communication with artists that would usually be outside their social reach. In that way the artist/fan relationship is increasingly understood as a peer-to-peer relationship even though it is also involves a market transaction.

On the other hand, fans' roles have also changed from being (more or less passive) consumers of music to now also performing different kinds of immaterial labor for the artists as they promote their music and provide emotional support (Baym & Burnett 2009). The case of Efterklang and the 'private-public screenings' of *The Ghost of Piramida* provides a powerful example of the latter. By having fans host and promote screenings of their music, Efterklang manifested a tendency toward a degree of social support and marketing labor from fans that ties the fans closer to the band on a social level, while also generating additional attention for the band.

The Media Content Loop

Parallel to the change in social roles with the emergence of social media, the media texts produced and distributed by musicians is also changing. In the cases of particularly Stolberg and Ellis Paul (and to some extent also Barthelmes), the analysis showed how they have expanded upon the traditional role of musicians as media producers. Where middle-layer musicians would traditionally be expected to take responsibility only for production of music, these musicians to varying degrees take on a role as media producers. Stolberg produces documentaries, teaching materials and

classical concerts. Ellis Paul publishes children's books and also sells access to media content in the form of more personal interaction on Amplifi, and live-streamed concerts from his living room through Concert Window.

These examples serve as examples of what Meyrowitz calls 'the media content loop'. In this effect loop, there is a "[...] circular relationship between the structure of information-systems and their content. Any major change in the overall patters of social information flow affects the content of all media" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 179).

Another example of this is that with YouTube's prominent position in as not only a platform for sharing home videos, but also as a platform for music streaming, the importance of the music video as a medium has been revitalized. The production of music videos used to be a substantial investment that was reserved for the few singles that were candidates for the few broadcast slots available on TV. With the importance of YouTube as platform for discovering and listening to music, the music video has become something common for most professional artists, including middle-layer musicians. The budgets for such productions are naturally significantly smaller, which is reflected in the often less polished production of these videos. On the other hand, the videos are often evaluated according to other criteria within this new platform. The self-produced rustic music videos of Brian Barthlemes' bands provides an example of this.

For Meyrowitz, the starting point of the media content loop is the homogenization of content that follows from the collapse of previously distinct audiences. As I have discussed elsewhere, the context collapse that Meyrowitz identifies in electronic media can be said to be even more profound within digital media in general, and social media in particular. For Meyrowitz, the emergence of a 'middle region' is a consequence of this collapse that actively changes the content of media.

While the effect of electronic media was primarily a collapse of audiences across boundaries of gender, race and age, the effect of digital media is to expand this effect to include the erosion of the division between the public and private sphere. So the 'middle region' of artists today is not only an audience with mixed demographic backgrounds, but also a mix of family, friends, fans and even occasional stalkers.

These changes were enhanced by the relatively flat social structure inherent in the MySpace architecture as well as mainstream media coverage of some of the pioneers,

and has since been established as the *comme il faut* of social media appearance among artists. In this way the feedback loops work to reestablish structural equilibrium, and in that process, what was initially a distinctive characteristic of a few early adopting artists eventually becomes the social norm. Within a decade, interacting with fans through social media has gone from being a way to short-circuit the music labels' control with media and distribution, to being an obligation of the artists, which is often written into recording contracts.

Meyrowitz reflected on Goffman's observation of change in the balance between being 'on record' and being 'off record' – not only in broadcast media, but surprisingly also in print media. The interview was assumed to be primarily a transmission of 'for the record' messages, but in the early 1970s, print interviews increasingly included information of more informal character. Meyrowitz offers an explanation on this shift based on the argument that electronic media creates a 'presumption of intimacy' that has affected the level of intimate revelations in not only print interviews, but also biographies and memoirs (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 178).

From this perspective, the level of intimacy expected from artists in digital media merely represents another iteration of a development that has been ongoing for decades. However, social media also adds another layer to the 'presumption of intimacy' notes in electronic media. For middle-layer musicians, doing interviews for print or broadcast media remains a rather sporadic event. This means that fans traditionally might have expected a certain level of intimacy, but only at relatively infrequent intervals. With the ephemeral character of communication in social media it becomes an ongoing process rather than something that comes in waves in connection with an album release or tour. Artists that choose to step off the grid and neglect updating their social media profiles, run the risk of being forgotten by fans in the constant flow of information in social media.

The effect of this change is that the intimate information shared becomes more banal. After all, only few people (even musicians) have extraordinary experiences on a daily or weekly basis. This shift towards a more banal intimacy can be seen as a product of the need for artists to be continuously present in the media to get noticed. But this dynamic also carries over to other media platforms. For one example, this might help explain why the artists seen on television are often more cast as celebrities cooking dinner, learning to dance, or coaching amateurs, rather than reflecting over their own artistic production. And notably this tendency has also carried over to the frequency of

releases. Before the digital turn, it was not uncommon for an artist to release albums with four years between them, allowing time to tour to promote the album, as well as stepping off the grid for a period to write and record new material. This cycle has now been accelerated, so that new releases from an artist or a band are often only two years apart. And artists that hold on to the longer cycle fight to sustain their audiences' attention.

The Territorial Access Loop

Meyrowitz's third feedback loop addresses the issue of territorial access. He notes that even though electronic media undermine the relationship between social situations and physical places, place is still important in determining the social situation.

> Even if media provide much information that was once available only through physical presence, physical movement may can still be restricted regardless of apparent access to other people through media. (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 179)

For middle-layer rock musicians, this translates immediately to the way they use social media. Although there has been a shift towards a much more open, and at times intimate, communication between artists and fans, there is still a relatively strong physical divide between the two. At concerts, the stage still marks a clear boundary between the two. And even though fans often get the sense of 'knowing' the artists and get informational access to the rehearsal space, tour bus or even gatherings of friends and family, they usually don't have physical access to those spaces.

However, as Meyrowitz argues, changes in what we have mediated access to can sometimes lead to changes in social rules of access to physical places.

> The shift in information flow seems to create an imbalance, a tension between the individual's enhanced informational status and their still limited physical mobility. New rules of physical movement and access are developed, therefore, as a means of aligning spatial configurations with the new patterns of information flow (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 180)

For musicians the shift in information flow caused by digital media gives fans access to information about backstage activities like recording sessions and preparation for

concerts, as well as access to send direct messages to the artist, engaging in conversations. Although this access is still restricted and filtered by the artist, it usually represents an increase in informational access for fans. As noted above, this change does not directly translate into changed social conventions where fans have physical access to these activities.

However, it does change the artist/fan interaction at concerts in different ways. One of he most banal ways this happen is when artists invite fans to meet them at the merchandise table after the concert. Another similar interaction is when artists respond to requests of particular songs from fans through social media before the concert, or when fans use online dialogue or social media posts as the starting point for initiating a conversation with the artist at the merchandise table after the concert. Ellis Paul provided an example of this when he told me that social media has made him feel more connected to his fans, and that he often had prior knowledge about the fans that came to him after a show because they had interacted online prior to the show. Paul, furthermore, has made informational access to areas like his living room or his private archive of magazine clippings and live recordings the basis of an supplementary income.

Even though they can be understood as changing as a consequence of the introduction of digital media, these changes are only relatively small alterations of situations in the physical encounter between fans and artists. Before digital media, fans also came to the merchandise table to talk to the artist, requested songs, and referenced previous encounters with the artist as a way to initiate contact.

From that perspective, the rules of territorial access have not changed significantly with the changes is informational access. At the micro level, the rules of territorial access have proved relatively stable, but at the macro level changes have been more substantial.

But digital media, in particular social media, have had significant impact on the way musicians access translocal and international scenes in two ways: by enabling frictionless global distribution of recorded music, and by facilitating the cultivation of professional and personal networks.

First, digital distribution has changed the informational access to music by increasing the availability of music, both by eliminating the need for physically moving CDs from

producer to consumer, but also lowering the barriers of entry into the market. From the audience perspective, this means that music is now easily and cheaply available, and even with a much broader variety than before digital distribution. From the perspective of the middle-layer musician, this development has profound impact on the audience they can reach with their music. With physical distribution, music markets are highly regional (in some cases national) in the sense that the artist's music would only reach the areas covered by their label and distributor. For artists in a small music economy like the Danish, their music would usually only be available within Denmark or, in some cases, Scandinavia. On the other hand, the labels and distributors in these small markets also had the advantage of being centrally located in these small markets, and therefore were often in a better position to secure these artists good exposure on radio as well as in record stores and live venues. So with physical distribution, local artists are/were restricted to a limited market, but have a privileged position within that market.

With digital media, music markets are to a much lesser degree tied to physical place. When music is available on YouTube, iTunes or Spotify, it is equally accessible from anywhere in the world. In this sense, digital distribution radically changes the informational access to music. This does not inevitably lead to easier physical connections between artists and fans – at least one of the parts have to travel if an American fan has to see a Danish artist perform at a concert. In this sense, digital media create an imbalance between an increased informational accessibility and a limited physical mobility. As mentioned above, Meyrowitz argues that new rules of access often develop in order to "[align] spatial configurations with the new patterns of information flow" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 180).

Particularly for the Danish musicians, Stolberg and Thomsen, the ability to connect with an audience outside their Danish home territory is an example of how digital distribution has enabled their music to be available in markets they traditionally would not have had access to.

Second, social media have increased the ability to cultivate personal and professional networks that connect the musicians to translocal scenes. In the case of Barthelmes, we saw how he used social media to connect to his 'road family' of musician colleagues and fans in other American cities. But the increased global access to recorded music, created the opportunity for development of transnational music markets that are defined more by aesthetic preference than geographical place. The cases of Stolberg

and Efterklang showed how a band that is not particularly well known anywhere in the world, nevertheless manages to sustain a career by tapping into a strong global community for niche music. Furthermore, one of the ways for record labels to reduce risk has often been to opt for a contract model with the artists, where the artists are responsible for recording and producing the master recording, and in return artists own the master recording and are free to exploit it on markets not covered in the contract (for Danish artists, contracts often cover only Scandinavia). Thomsen and his band Veto's forming of a limited liability company that functioned as a production company and financed the recording and owned master rights, as well as Stolberg and Efterklang's practice of releasing their music independently in Scandinavia are two examples of how this can be organized.

However, even though global markets are in principle much more accessible, some of the artists I interviewed still referenced the need of being physically present in order to build an audience. For Danish artists this means leaving the comfort of the national touring circuit, where they have often become accustomed to relatively high fees, in favor of touring in other, larger, countries like Germany, UK or USA. But also some of the American artists I interviewed talked about building their career with a base in a certain region, and growing their fan base, gradually expanding their touring circuit from being initially focused on one of the coasts to eventually becoming a national touring artist.

Even though digital media have substantially changed the informational flow of music, and even though these changes have indirectly led to changes in the contractual flexibility that lead to easier access to foreign markets, building an audience for the music is still very much tied to local geographies – especially for niche artists that don't have access to major mainstream media platforms. For professional niche musicians, building an audience is still to a large extent done through touring and trying to get coverage by niche media. Radio is still an important factor in getting exposure to an audience outside the immediate network[35].

Even though digitization alters the informational flow by making music globally accessible, music markets are still to a large extent tied to geographical place, as seen by the fact that locally signed artists dominate the top positions of the charts in many

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[35] Contrary to what seems to be common belief, radio is still the primary source of music discovery for all age groups except the youngest, aged 12-17, who name streaming services (including YouTube) as their primary source for discovery (Koda 2013).

markets (Ferreira & Waldfogel 2013). The percentage of domestic artists on the top 10 album charts in Scandinavia for 2013 (Sweden 90%, Denmark 80% and Norway 60%) outline a widespread tendency of national dominance of the album charts (IFPI 2014a). This is a clear indication that rising above the 'noise floor' in any regional or national market requires local knowledge and network (as well as music that caters to a local audience), and even though local artists still dominate their domestic markets, the access to these has greatly increased with the last decade's changes in the music industries. Record companies have usually handled the development and marketing of new talent within the music industries. With the loss of the de facto distribution monopoly of these record companies (and thereby following loss of revenue), several labels sought to reduce their risk. As described in chapter 6, one way of reducing risk was by letting artists take care of the production process. This means that a lot of artists today own their own master tapes, and are free to exploit them outside the territories covered by their contract.

In this sense, there is a complex relation between changes in informational and territorial access. Digital distribution have enabled artists to distribute their music globally, but paradoxically this has not led to and immediate increase in the ability to build global audiences as the amount of available music has simultaneously risen explosively. But the emergence of digital distribution has, never the less, indirectly increased the territorial access as the disruptions created by digital distribution has caused record labels to adopt a business model that enable the artists to circumvent the bureaucratic record label structures and market divisions.

Introducing the Industry Organization Loop

As outlined in the sections above, processes concerning *etiquette*, *media content* and *territorial access* in the media landscape have substantial impact on the role of the professional niche musician. These three effect loops, suggested by Meyrowitz, can be used to explain important aspects of the changing roles of middle-layer musicians. But it also becomes apparent that the introduction of digital media has also led to organizational changes within the music industries. As it is the case with the effect loops introduced by Meyrowitz, the organizational changes in the music industries are often perceived to be primarily a consequence of the emergence of digital media. But the effect of these changes on musicians' conditions is often ignored or viewed as

straightforward consequences of user behavior in the form of piracy and demand for social media interactions.

I suggest that changes in industry organization could instead be analyzed as a fourth *effect loop*. Meyrowitz defines effect loops according to Meyrowitz's two criteria. The first of these is that "… they not only respond to changes in media but also enhance the effects of new media" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173).

Changes in music industry organization following the emergence of digital media can definitively be understood as a response to changes in media. Record labels' loss of control of production and distribution monopoly, the transition to the service based business model of music streaming, and the more active role played by audiences in distributing, curating and producing music can all be seen as causes of changes in music industry organization (Wikström 2009, pp. 5-7).

These changes have, in turn, enhanced the effects of new media by building on and amplifying the inherent properties in digital media.

Digital production and distribution undermined the business models of the music industries that were based on control with the means of production and distribution. But as the music companies developed new digital business models, the changes have been amplified and embedded in the industry organization. What started out as opportunities to circumvent the closed circuits of the music industry has to some extent become 'business as usual', which can in itself be seen as an act of legitimization that amplifies the effect new media. Furthermore, by embracing the shift from control to access, the music industries have accelerated development of services as well as audience mentality within the field. By providing global access to their music catalogs, by increasingly expecting artists to play an active role in financing, producing, distributing and marketing their music, and by developing business models that emphasize music as a media product to be exploited across media platforms, music companies are not only responding to changes in the media landscape. They are actively enhancing processes that are inherent in this new digital media landscape.

The second criteria Meyrowitz uses to define feedback loops is that the processes "act as 'feedback loops' by working to establish a new balance between patterns of information flow and other social conventions; that is, these three variables change as

to return the social system to *structural equilibrium*, yet in doing so, they bring about *substantive change*" (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173)[Italics in original].

With the emergence of digital distribution and early social media (in the form of P2P file sharing and MySpace), new patterns of information flow disrupted industry organization. Record companies' privileged position as gatekeepers to production, distribution and marketing eroded as musicians and audience members could potentially perform these tasks themselves. Even though the initial response was to fight a battle to retain the framework of the old social system, more recent developments indicate that music industries are moving towards a new set of social conventions and structural organization.

One notable example of these changes is the multiple rights deal that got significant attention in the beginning of the 2000's (Stahl & Meier 2012). Record labels faced drops in revenue during this period, and even though they were still the primary force in developing and marketing new talent. This created a structural imbalance between different sectors of the music industries. Labels were losing money while revenue in the publishing and live sectors were increasing. Meier and Stahl argue that

> The 360 degree deal helps to assure a stable basis for organizational flexibility by incorporating and securing rights to ever-widening ranges of artists' activities and incomes, strengthening and expanding companies' rights to command and dispossess artists, and it does so by building on the very sturdy contractual foundations laid in the pre-digital era. (Stahl & Meier 2012, p. 445)

By including revenues from a broader spectrum of the artists' activities, music companies seek to reestablish the structural balance between their investments and possible returns. But in doing so, they also radically redefine the roles within the industry. Rather than being in the business of releasing recorded music and making a profit from this, record companies (now rebranding themselves as 'music companies') are now in the business of creating music brands that can be monetized across a wide variety of platforms (both mediated and non-mediated). This indicates a role change for music companies from previously being primarily concerned with producing and marketing music in the business-to-customer market of recorded music, towards now also relying on business-to-business monetization of music through for example

synchronization, as well as live revenue that stems from a combination of B2B (bookers, promoters and venues) and B2C (fans).

For artists, the 360 deal (or the less extensive 'multiple rights deal') becomes an institutionalization of the shift away from being primarily a musician towards being an 'artist' that produces media products in a much broader sense. This amplifies trends in digital media towards media convergence (Jenkins 2006) and remediation (Bolter & Grusin 2000), but simultaneously transforms it from a disruptive force that undermines old hierarchies and power relations to a means of reestablishing equilibrium within the music industries. This is not to argue that nothing has changed in the music industries. Equilibrium has been reestablished, but with new hierarchies, power relations and organizational territories.

Another area within the music industries where the search for structural equilibrium has brought immense change is in the relation between artists and music companies. For many record companies, the crisis in the 2000's was followed by a change in strategy. With the drop in revenue, there was significantly less money to invest in development of new talent or new recordings by established artists. Being a lot more risk-averse than previous decades, some record companies took advantage of the significantly lowered costs of production to shift risk to artists.

As discussed in detail in chapter 6, the shift of risk to artists became possible for largely the same reasons as the decline in sales that made them necessary. The significantly lowered cost of computer power, the development of non-technical user interfaces and high end software plugins in music production software, along with the emergence of networked media, has significantly lowered the economic investment and the level of technical competency required, as well as eroded the power of traditional gatekeepers in mainstream media.

Music companies seek to utilize these properties of the digital media landscape. They can potentially let artists record their own material, develop their artistic profile and build a fan base via digital media. This lowers the company's economic investment in development, and instead lets them focus much more on monetization. The *raison d'etre* of music companies is now to a lesser extent their ability to provide a framework for developing and producing music. The democratizing aspects of technology make them potentially obsolete in this sense. What justifies music companies' existence is

their ability to cut through the noise in the digital media landscape and provide exposure that can lead to a sustainable economy for the artist and the label.

For the middle-layer musicians studied in this dissertation, the changes in industry organization outlined above creates challenges in sustaining a professional career. As analyzed in the previous chapter, they have responded to these changes by adapting an ad hoc entrepreneurial approach to their professional organization and media practices. This shift is closely connected to the dynamics of the industry organization feedback loop. One key point in the definition of the role as ad hoc entrepreneurs is that the role emerges in response to challenges that are directly and indirectly related to the introduction of digital media. However, as these entrepreneurial processes become institutionalized in the industry organization they also work to enhance the effects of new media. Furthermore, the shift towards these entrepreneurial practices can be seen as a move towards reestablishment of a structural equilibrium, in both economic and organizational sense, for these musicians. However, the process also implicates the redefinition of social roles, which is the kind of dynamics Meyrowitz addresses when he argues that feedback loops seek to reestablish a structural equilibrium, and thereby bring substantive change (Meyrowitz 1985, p. 173).

This shift in focus is a notable change in industry organization that can be directly linked to the introduction of new media. Digital networked media are both the primary reason for the need to change, as well as the cause of disruption that has enabled the shift in organization. But it doesn't stop here. The changes in social structure of the music industries amplify the effects of digital media by changing the social roles of music companies as well as musicians. By incorporating the opportunities offered by digital media in the business structure and organization, the reach of the change is extended. As it is the case with the introduction of contracts covering multiple rights across different sectors of the music and media industries, the emerging new social roles are institutionalized when they become a basis of new strategies among music companies. This creates a feedback loop that benefits artists that fit into this new system (who are ready to take on the new role of the artist) and thereby enhancing the effects of digital media. By making the redefined role of the artist the basis of industry organization, the new role goes from being an opportunity to being a prerequisite for building and sustaining a professional career as a musician.

An illustrative example of how the changing social roles gradually become institutionalized is the fact that educational institutions within popular music have

started focusing on developing their students 'entrepreneurial' competencies. This represents a significant conceptual shift from an understanding of the labor market for popular musicians as a 'freelance market', where record labels are the primary investors and project managers. The emerging tendency to understand musicians as entrepreneurs rather than freelancers is for example seen at educational institutions. Here, there is a shift towards recognizing the more active part musicians now have to take in development, investment and project management. To some extent, the motivation for implementing such changes at educational institutions is to attempt to keep up with a changing labor market for the graduates. As entrepreneurial competencies are increasingly demanded to become successful, the educations need to respond to this to stay relevant. But implementing entrepreneurship as a part of the curriculum for musicians is simultaneously a bow to the new social roles that started out as demands from industry actors and audiences. When incorporating the entrepreneurial role of the musician in the curriculum for aspiring music professionals, the shift of roles becomes legitimized and naturalized for a new generation of musicians.

The increased creative and productive role of some users – often referred to as *produsers* (Bruns 2008; van Dijck 2009) can be understood as a case of organizational change within the music industries. The creative activities of audiences and fans have usually been something that took place far removed from the professional market, and the role of this segment has usually not been associated with music industry organization. But with digital media, the creative output of some of these users appears alongside professional productions. From a market perspective, this is potentially disruptive, as it blurs the distinction between market and non-market production and distribution. As it is particularly the case with YouTube videos, the industry response has however to a large extent been to build business models on the emerging patterns of media use. On the one hand, this radically changes the role of the *produser* in the music industries from a passive consumer to also being an active part of media production, which serves to reestablish stability in the hierarchy of the industries.

Adding an industry organization loop to the loops analyzed by Meyrowitz makes it possible to take into account the ways in which the changing music industries organization is not only caused by, and relevant to economic aspects of professional musicians' working conditions, but that these changes also to a large extent redefine the social situation between industry actors, musicians and audiences. This process,

like the processes described by Meyrowitz, might appear to be caused by independent decisions, but I suggest that it is instead to be seen as a response to changes in social situations between industry, artists and audiences created by digital media, and that this process has to some extent been initiated in an attempt to reestablish a 'structural equilibrium' (the centrality of record companies in the music industries), but that it has, on its way, brought significant change in the roles of both artists and record companies.

How Digital Media Affect Middle-layer Musicians

For professional niche musicians, the impact of the effect loops outlined above is arguably more extensive than for their mainstream colleagues. The effect loops of digital media change the roles of all musicians, but both structural and social changes have a greater impact on artists that cater to a marginal part of the market. There are several reasons for this, which I will discuss in this section.

The increased impact can be understood in relation to different characteristics of the digital media landscape: these include, but are not limited to: (1) The increased access to (niche) media platforms, (2) a lower hierarchical barrier between artist and audience, (3) The emergence of global markets for niche music, and (4) the extended reach of structural changes for artists with low level of potential profits.

For professional niche musicians, the first two characteristics are intimately linked. In the electronic media landscape, niche music had very limited access to media coverage. With the emergence of digital media, these artists have increased access to online niche media in the form of online niche magazines, music blogs, as well as personal websites, social media profiles and YouTube channels. In this light, the transition to building a media presence across the plethora of platforms in the digital media landscape is arguably considerably more encompassing for niche artists than for their mainstream colleagues. First of all because the more popular artists already had significantly better access to broadcast and print media, but also because their larger profit margins enables them to have other people working on the considerable number of tasks involved in sustaining presence across the many platforms.

The difference in hierarchical status between mainstream and middle-layer musicians means that effect of both the etiquette loop and the media content loop is enhanced. It

is somehow easier to understand that a successful mainstream artist hasn't got time to answer every request from fans, than it is with niche artists. And mainstream musicians have long had a professional organization around them. Even though digital media tend to even out the differences between artists and fans at a general level, the initial relation between niche artists and their audience has always been relatively even. This has consequences for the extent of the 'presumption of intimacy' mentioned earlier. If an audience already feel relatively equal to the artist, the presumption of intimacy is also more likely to be much closer to what they expect from their friends.

In terms of territorial access, the effect of digital media can also be seen as more encompassing for niche artists. For the stars, the market that they address has been global since the introduction of electronic media. And even tough digital media pose challenges for these artists' ability to gain global attention, the change that comes with digital media is much more substantial for niche artists. With digital media, the conditions for developing global niche markets are enhanced in several ways.

First of all, digital media has greatly improved the possibilities of building and sustaining a relationship outside one's local music scene and market. The ability to address niche audiences is one very important aspect of this development, when viewing it from the perspective of the professional niche musicians. With niche media comes the opportunity to have a media presence without compromising with the artistic intentions and ideologies that led to a career as a musician that caters to a niche audience. But musicians can also utilize digital media to communicate and connect with transnational music scenes consisting of producers, musicians, and fans that share musical taste (Mjøs 2012, p. 98). For middle-layer musicians that often don't have any marketing budget or promotion support worth noticing from their label or management, these transnational music scenes can act as not only a potential market for their music, but also an invaluable source of labor (in both material and immaterial senses) by reviewing, promoting, booking shows, helping with travel practicalities, curating (Baym & Burnett 2009, p. 441). In this sense, the access to international (or transnational) markets has probably been enhanced more for niche musicians than for their mainstream colleagues.

This tendency is further strengthened by the erosion of boundaries around national and regional markets, which is on one hand connected with the transition from physical to digital distribution, that enables distribution that is not reliant on a certain scale to be profitable, and on the other hand enhanced by the structural shift towards

artists being responsible for the recording and production process, and therefore often also owning the master rights to these recordings. Both of these tendencies impact most types of artists, but since building a broad fan base in a small market - as well as persuading record companies to release niche music with narrow profit margins globally – has been, and still is, more plausible for mainstream artists, the increased access to global markets is arguably a greater change for niche artists.

A final characteristic of the digital media landscape that results in a greater change in social roles for niche artists is tied to the increased level of financial risk. The creation of rock and pop stars has traditionally been seen as a rational way of reducing risk by retaining some level of market predictability. When the recording industry has seen significant decline in revenue since the turn of the decade, it therefore only seems logic that record companies would focus their investment further on the relatively safe bets. In this new media economy, "Betting on star talent creates important marketing advantages, drawing audiences and sponsors alike" (Elberse 2013, p. 8). This focus on investment in stars however also means that there is less economic latitude for investing in niche artists. Building on a general tendency within the new economy of "entrepreneurial labour" (Neff, Wissinger, & Zukin 2006), all artists are to some extent exposed to this structural shift in risk-taking responsibilities, but the "blockbuster economy" (Elberse 2013) reduces the possible economic return on investment, and this increases the pressure for flexibility from niche artists.

Conclusion

The ongoing developments in digital media and communication technologies have continued to expand and transform music cultures and music industries. The transformative role of media has long been recognized by laymen and experts alike, and music business journalism continuously offers reports, opinions, and future scenarios. The complexity and scope of the developments poses great challenges to research on music culture and business. Scholars are still struggling to create overviews of the ongoing evolution and interpreting the core implications. This dissertation drew inspiration from the analytical survey literature at hand, including Wikström's *The Music Industry: Music in the Cloud* (2009; 2013). In the process of studying the general developments, this dissertation project discovered a gap in the literature. My experience and field research on rock music in Copenhagen brought attention to the situation for middle-layer musicians. This dissertation thus evolved as a contribution to the analysis of general, macro-level changes, refining and developing existing knowledge based on new industry data, among other things, but also using this knowledge as a broad context for analyzing the specific organizational and communication practices among middle-layer musicians in the digital age, focusing on the early 2010s. In methodical terms, this study has thus dealt with the complexity of the field by combining macro- and micro-level analysis. The macro-level analysis focuses on economic and organizational change in the music industries, and the effects of these changes on the micro level is analyzed through case studies of the practices of four individual musicians.

The dissertation expanded the perspective from the *music business* literature to include the perspectives of *cultural labor* and *media theory* to analyze how the industry and the musicians adapt to media developments.

Combining quantitative music industry data with research on cultural labor and networked media, the dissertation has analyzed how major structural changes are media-driven. Digitalization has created challenges through changing the basic conditions for middle-layer musicians. The analysis showed how digitalization has changed the economic flows, the industry organization, the social interaction with fans, and the character of the media texts that are produced as well as how these texts are distributed. On the other hand, the same developments in the media landscape

that have created challenges have also offered ways to respond to these challenges. In pursuing these new opportunities, musicians are also gradually changing the way they organize their professional activities and their media practices. Although these two aspects might at first seem unrelated, they are actually in a dialectic relationship.

Through analyzing industry data at a macro level and relating it to changing consumption patterns in digital media, I argued that the changing media practices of users have led to organizational change. For example the practice of peer production and sharing of information has led to a change in the economic flows and power relations between the music industries.

The empirical case studies showed how changing organizational patterns in the music industries have also led middle-layer musicians to adopt new media practices, for instance by communicating more directly with their fans, and by recording and releasing their music in more or less independently of established record companies. In order to do so, they have however adopted new organizational practices within the bands, more reflectively forming companies and taking responsibility for activities reaching beyond the creative activities of creating and performing music. In this new organization, media production, both in the sense of producing audio and visual media text, but also in the sense of communicating an artistic persona, has emerged as a distinct form of labor.

This dynamic between changes in the media landscape and organizational and social change is what Meyrowitz (1985) calls *feedback loops*. The development is initiated by the introduction of networked digital media, and through each of these feedback loops, the effects of these new media are enhanced. In the pursuit of structural equilibrium, the organization of professional activities and media practices of these middle-layer musicians are substantially changed. They take on a new social role as *ad hoc entrepreneurs*.

The dissertation has to a large extent treated the two focus points, professional organization and media practices, separately. It is however important to point out that this has primarily been a matter of analytical stringency. The two aspects are in fact closely related to each other.

At a general level, contemporary media culture, with its emphasis on active users and dispersion of cultural texts across multiple platforms, builds on a democratization of

the means of production and distribution of media texts, which is enabled by technological developments. But the social practices of this media culture – particularly the widespread illegal sharing of professional media texts and increased volume of amateur content – have led to a re-appropriation of this media sphere by music and media conglomerates, and thereby affected the effects of democratization by changing the industries' business models and organization.

These general developments have shaped the more specific professional practices of middle-layer musicians. Responding to organizational and economic changes in the industry, they have increased the level of professionalization and taken responsibility for the commercial aspects of their careers by assuming the role as ad hoc entrepreneurs. An important facet of this role is that media production, both in the form of producing professional media texts and in the form of self-representation in social media, becomes a distinct part of their labor. The influence, however, also goes the other way. The increased focus on direct communication between artists and fans in social media has been a crucial factor in enabling musicians to successfully adopt an entrepreneurial approach. Furthermore, these developments on the specific level reflect back on the general developments, for example when fans start expecting musicians to share more of their personal lives, and record labels expect them to take on the risk and responsibility of talent development and production of media texts.

To sum up, the contributions of this dissertation to existing literatures can be described in the following way:

1) The dissertation contributes to the methodology music industry research by integrating analyses of quantitative music industry data with qualitative micro level case studies of musicians. This provides a framework for understanding the complex relations between conditions for individual musicians and conditions for the music business as a whole, which should be considered in future research within the field.

2) The dissertation contributes empirically with analyses of digitalization's impact on the music industries' organization and business models. But importantly, it combines and develops this perspective with empirical case studies of how middle-layer rock musicians negotiate these changing conditions, thus also contributing with a qualitative understanding of the practices of individual musicians. The case studies illustrate that musicians respond to the challenges and opportunities of the digital media landscape in very different ways. They each have different approaches in terms

of the degree of independence and the centrality of digital media. But they have in common that their media practices and organization of professional activities have been shaped in response to changes that are directly or indirectly linked to digitalization.

These activities include a significant move towards independent production within an industrial framework. Either by recording independently and licensing the recording to an established record company, or by recording and releasing the record independently. Though there are significant DIY elements in this approach, it is important to note that this is only in the organizational sense – not in the aesthetic sense. From the perspective of media practices, the activities are even more diverse, but include embracing new media affordances for non-generic transmedia storytelling, using social media to cultivate personal and professional networks, and developing new business models based on different levels of media access and interaction with fans.

3) The dissertation contributes to the theoretical understanding of the practices musicians as cultural workers within the frame of music industry research by adding knowledge about how the dynamics between organization of professional activities and media practices in the developing media landscape have shaped the entrepreneurial practices of middle-layer rock musicians. It emphasizes the complex and idiosyncratic nature of the approach taken by the musicians, and argues that the development can only be understood against the backdrop of cultural labor as an activity that that is not primarily driven by economic incentives. Creative autonomy is simultaneously a normative ideological principle for music cultures and a structural precondition for production in the music industries. This shapes the practices of musicians, for instance illustrated by the way social media enables the performance of self to become a distinct form of labor in the shape of a branded self.

Furthermore, the dissertation contributes to the understanding of the connection between developments in the media landscape and the social roles of middle-layer musicians by developing Meyrowitz's conception of feedback loops as a way to understand the dialectic process between new media and industry organization as something that reestablishes a structural equilibrium but also affects social roles.

The conception of middle-layer musicians as *ad hoc entrepreneurs* offers a frame for understanding how new social roles develop in response to the organizational and communicational aspects of digitalization.

In sum, the dissertation's overall contribution to the research field is an understanding of the professional activities of middle-layer rock musicians within an industry framework. It is my hope that this approach can inform the basis of future research, and hopefully add to the findings from project by expanding the empirical frame of study to including amateurs and stars, as well as exploring the political implications of the changes found in this dissertation.

English Abstract

This dissertation is about is about how structural changes in media and music industries shape the organization of professional activities and media practices of middle-layer rock musicians. This is studied through an integration of analyses of structural changes in the music industries based on quantitative industry data, and qualitative case studies.

The dissertation contributes to the music industry research with a particular interest in the musicians' perspective, and integrates micro and macro perspectives on the economic, organizational, communicational and social consequences of digitalization.

The dissertation is organized in three main parts.

Part one reviews literature and concepts from three distinct research traditions that each cover their perspectives of the nexus between music industries (Horkheimer & Adorno 2006/1944, Hirsch 1972, Negus 2011/1993, Hesmondhalgh 2012, Wikström 2013), media theory (Baym 2012, Baym & boyd 2012, Benkler 2006, Jenkins 2006, Hearn 2008, Meyrowitz 1985) and cultural labor (Ryan 1992, Banks 2007, Stahl 2013).

Part two analyzes first the structural and economic change in the music industries since the advent of digital distribution from a macro perspective. It argues that there has been a significant shift in revenue streams from the recording industry to the live and publishing industries, and that organization of the industries has developed in response to this. It also argues that digitalization has led to a democratization of cultural production that polarizes the music industry and create challenges for middle-layer musicians.

Secondly, it investigates the micro perspective by analyzing empirical case studies of the organization of professional activities and media practices of four musicians from Copenhagen and Boston in the early 2010s. The case studies illustrate the idiosyncratic approaches musicians take in shaping their professional practices in response to the structural challenges. Both in terms of strengthening their independent professional organization, and in terms of utilizing new media to develop their communication, media production, and business models.

Part three develops two primary analytical themes. First, the conception of musicians as entrepreneurs is developed, and the emerging social role of middle-layer rock musicians is conceptualized as *ad hoc entrepreneurs*. Second, the relation between new media and social change is developed drawing on Meyrowitz's (1985) conception of *feedback loops* as a way of understanding how organizational changes in response to new media practices can lead to a reestablishment of structural equilibrium, while substantially changing the social roles of the musicians.

Resumé på dansk

Denne afhandling handler om hvordan strukturelle forandringer i medie- og musikindustrier former mellemlagsmusikeres organisering af professionelle aktiviteter og mediepraksisser. Dette undersøges gennem interation af analyser af strukturelle forandringer i musikindustrierne baseret på kvantitative branchedata, og kvalitative casestudier.

Afhandlingen bidrager til musikbrancheforskningen med en særlig interesse for musikernes perspektiv, og integrerer micro- og macro-perspektiver på økonomiske, organisatoriske, kommunikative og sociale konsekvenser af digitaliseringen.

Afhandlingen er struktureret i tre hoveddele.

Første del redegør for litteratur og begreber fra tre forskningsområder, som hver især dækker perspektiver på krydsfeltet mellem musikbranche (Horkheimer & Adorno 2006/1944, Hirsch 1972, Negus 2011/1993, Hesmondhalgh 2012, Wikström 2013), medier (Baym 2012, Baym & boyd 2012, Benkler 2006, Jenkins 2006, Hearn 2008, Meyrowitz 1985) og kulturelt arbejde (Ryan 1992, Banks 2007, Stahl 2013).

Anden del analyserer først de strukturelle og økonomiske forandringer i musikbranchen siden fremkomsten af digital distribution, fra et macro-perspektiv. Her argumenteres for at der er sket et markant skift i pengestrømmene fra pladebranchen til live- og forlags-brancherne, og at branchernes organisering har forandret sig som modsvar til dette. Der argumenteres endvidere for at digitaliseringen har medført en demokratisering af kulturel produktion, som polariserer musikbranchen og skaber udfordringer for mellemlagsmusikere.

Derudover belyses micro-perspektivet gennem analyse af empiriske casestudier af den professionelle organisering og mediepraksisser hos fire mellemlagsmusikere fra København og Boston i de tidlige 2010'ere. Casestudierne illustrerer de idiosynkratiske tilgange musikerne tager til at forme deres professionelle praksisser som modsvar til de strukturelle udfordringer – såvel i form af måden de styrker deres uafhængige professionelle organisering, som måden de udnytter nye medier til at udvikle deres kommunikation, medieproduktion og forretningsmodeller.

Tredje del udvikler de to primære analytiske temaer. Først udvikles forståelsen af musikere som entreprenører, og den sociale rolle for mellemlags rockmusikere som er opstået begrebsliggøres som *ad hoc entreprenører*. Dernæst udvikles forståelsen af relationen mellem nye medier og sociale forandringer ved at trække på Meyrowitzs (1985) begreb om *feedback loops* som en måde at forstå hvordan organisatoriske forandringer der opstår som modsvar til nye mediepraksisser, kan føre til en genetablering af en strukturel ligevægt, men bringe substantielle forandringer i musikeres sociale roller med sig.

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